A POWERFUL SERIAL, "THE OMAR PASSION RUBY," BEGINS NEXT WEEK.

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Red Days in Venezuela;

— Or, Three Americans in a Revolution.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE INSURGENTS.

The ship was gone.

There was no doubt of that.

And, though our friends were not aware of the fact, it was nevertheless true that they had been the cause of its going—the innocent and unsuspecting cause, but the cause just the same.

The way of it was this: Immediately after the fight some of the insurgents had got together and talked the matter over. Naturally they brought up the part the boys and Sandy had taken in the matter.

Then some one said:

"They are our enemies, and, consequently, the ship in which they came is an enemy."

"Naturally," another agreed.

"Such being the case," the first man went on, "it is dangerous to let the ship remain in port."

"You're right about that," another cried.

"And we would be a pack of fools if we permitted it to remain."

"We certainly would."

"Then it is our duty to go down and order it away."

"It is! Come on!" were the cries that arose all around. Down with the ship! Down with our enemies!"

The speaker held up his hand commanding silence.

"Listen," he said. "What we do we must do quickly. We must act before the Government people get there ahead of us. We must order the ship away, and threaten to burn it if it does not go. But we must be careful about using violence, for we don't want to have the United States Government to reckon with."

"That's so," several said thoughtfully.

"We all know," the speaker went on, "that the United States won't stand any foolishness, and that if we do anything to roil her she'll send a gunboat down here and blow us up. So we must proceed with caution and be careful about using violence. I hope you understand."

"We do," came in a chorus of voices.

"Then come on."

The party immediately began their march toward the ship, and on the way they were joined by many other men. So when they arrived at the wharf they were over a hundred strong.

Their spokesman called for the captain of the vessel, and, when he came on deck, gave him orders to leave port instantly. The captain parleyed, but when the insurgents threatened to burn his ship he gave in and immediately sailed away.

A braver and a more honorable man would not have given away and forsaken his friends as the Captain forsook the boys and Sandy, but there are men who do not hesitate to sacrifice their best friends when their own interest demands it. The Captain of the ship was one of that kind.

Seeing the ship gone the boys and Sandy looked at one another blankly, too dumfounded to speak. That the Captain had deserted them they would not believe possible, yet why should the vessel have left the wharf except for the purpose of sailing away?

After a long silence Joe said:

"What does it mean?"

Sandy shook his head.

"That's one too many for me," he replied. "Do you suppose we are really left?"

"Why it certainly looks very much like that to me, sure. I can't make it out in any other light. Can you?"

"No."

"But why the Captain would abandon us like this is a puzzle to me."

"And to me. But since he has abandoned us I can't see that it makes any difference why he has done it."

"No. The thing that matters now is what we are to do under the circumstances—in which direction we are to point our bows."

"Exactly. Have you anything to suggest?"

"Not a thing. So far as I can see there is no land in sight, and the compass is unsettled."

"That may be true, but you couldn't foresee all this. You did what you thought was right and proper, and no blame attached to you. Besides, we didn't have to come if we didn't want to."

"Well, I hold myself to blame all the same."

"Well, you're not to blame, and if you don't drop the matter and say no more about it we'll leave you and never speak to you again. Won't we, Sam?"

"That's just what we will," Sam answered. "We'll cut you dead on the spot."

"Well, in that case," Sandy said, resignedly, "I'll furl my sail and stow my gab. I wouldn't lose the friendship of you two mates for the richest cargo that ever sailed. Still, I have my opinion, and I'm anchored fast to it."

"That's all right, but whenever your opinion reflects on yourself don't mention it to us."

"No," Sam said, "and instead of talking about what has been done, and what might have been done, please tell us something about what we are next to do."

Sandy slowly shook his head, and after a short silence replied:

"I'd be glad to do that same, but I must confess that I can't see my way to land in any direction. I've lost my bearings completely."

They stood for a long time silent and they

were all busily thinking. Finally Joe remarked thoughtfully:

"The whole sum and substance of the matter is this: We're here among these people, and the prospects are that we shall have to remain among them for some time. How long we shall have to remain we cannot tell."

"And nobody else can tell," Sandy said. "I wish I had hold of that captain, blast his measly eyes!"

"But you haven't hold of him," Joe observed, "so just let me finish."

"All right, mate. Excuse me for cutting across your course. Sail on."

"Well, as I was saying, we are here among these people and there is no telling how long we shall have to stay. We have got mixed up in their troubles, and one side looks upon us as friends. Naturally, the other side will look upon us as enemies. Now, under the circumstances, what can we do?"

"What do you say?" Sandy asked in turn.

"There is but one thing, so far as I can see," Joe said, "that we can do."

"Well, up anchor and let us know what it is."

"As a matter of self-protection we've got to go back to those who are friendly to us and remain with them."

"That won't be difficult."

"No, but can't you see that if we remain with them the chances are ten to one that we'll have to fight with them?"

"Do you think so?"

"Of course. They'll expect it of us, and very likely they'll even demand it."

"Well, it's not our fight, but if they force us into it we'll have to do the best we can for them."

"Then you agree that we shall go back to them?"

"Sure. There's no other port to steer into so far as I can see."

"Then we had better go at once. Some of the insurgents are liable to come along at any moment, and they'd certainly make it warm for us."

"And we'd make it warm for them at the same time. Still, we don't want to have any more trouble than is necessary."

They turned and walked back to the main business street and then turned down toward the place where the fight had occurred.

They noticed that the stores and shops were practically deserted, while here and there along the sidewalk men were collected in groups excitedly discussing the fight.

Whether the men were the friends of the Government, or whether they belonged to the insurgents, our friends did not know. Naturally, however, they supposed they were the former. They took it for granted that the victors would be in possession of the main part of the town.

It occurred to them as rather peculiar, however, that there was no demonstration in their honor as they walked down the street where the people had been so profusive but a short time before. They could not tell what to make of so sudden and complete a change!

They spoke of it among themselves and marveled at it, but finally concluded that perhaps the nature of the people was effervescent, and that, having extravagantly poured out their praises, they had no more to say.

However, it was not long before they put a different construction on the people's behavior and saw it in a far more serious light.

They had just reached a corner where a large crowd was collected, then suddenly from just behind them went up the cry:

"Down with the foreigners! Down with the Yankee sailors!"

Instantly from all around the cry was taken up, and it echoed and re-echoed all up and down the street.

At the same time there was a general movement among the people, and from all sides they began to crowd around Sandy and the boys, waving their clubs and fists and heaping curses upon them.

In a moment our friends found themselves completely surrounded by the insurgents, with no avenue of escape open before or behind them, and, so far as they could see, no assistance anywhere near.

CHAPTER VII.
A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

Why the friends of the Government had withdrawn from the scene of the fight so soon after their victory, giving up the ground to their enemies, Sandy and the boys did not know, and just then they had but little time to conjecture.

There were other and more urgent things demanding their attention.

Seeing that they were surrounded, with no possibility of escape, they backed up against a building and drew their pistols, which they pointed at their assailants.

This time, however, their enemies did not fall back at the sight of the pistols, but, on the contrary, continued to press closer around, howling and threatening in the most bloodthirsty and vindictive manner.

Many of the assailants carried guns and pistols, and why they did not use them was a wonder to the assailed. Their whole desire seemed to be to get hold of the boys and Sandy and beat them.

Probably they were not sufficiently provoked to kill them outright, or it may have been that they were actuated by a wholesome fear of the United States. Be that as it may, they refrained from shooting and at once ending the contest and forever silencing the Yankees.

On the other hand, the boys and Sandy held their fire, knowing that the moment they should shoot their enemies would reply in kind. Nevertheless, they held their guns ready for use, and in such a threatening manner that their assailants refrained for a little while from pressing too near, and for a moment there was a lull in the noise and clamor.

Availing himself of the temporary silence Joe turned to his companions and hurriedly whispered:

"We've got to fight for it this time. There is no other show."

"We have," Sand yanswered calmly.

"And when the shooting begins," Sam added, "it will soon be all up with us."

"It will," Joe replied, "but it will be all up with some of them first."

"You're right there, mate," Sandy said. "We'll set sail for some of them before we cast off anchor."

"That's what we will," Joe replied grimly. "But we must not begin the fight, and we must not fire until we positively have to do so. Let them howl and curse and rage to their hearts' content, so long as they keep their hands off of us. It may afford them some pleasure or comfort and it can't hurt us. But the moment one of them lifts a finger to injure one of us, in that minute plug him with a ball of lead."

Sandy nodded understandingly, at the same time keeping a sharp watch on the enemy.

A minute or so passed, and the insurgents had begun to crowd the Americans uncomfortably. It was plainly evident that matters could not go on much longer without a catastrophe. The Yankees stood cool and firm, with no signs of fear, and with an unmistakable determination to defend themselves to the last extremity, but this did not deter the enemy. Rather, it added to their anger and rage.

"Down with the Yankee dogs!" one man finally yelled, at the same time flourishing a gun. "Riddle them with bullets where they stand!"

In a flash twenty guns were leveled at the breasts of Joe and Sam and the sailor. In equally as brief time our friends had their pistols pointed steadily at the hearts of three of the insurgents, with their fingers on the triggers ready to fire.

In another second the guns on both sides would have spoken, three or more of the insurgents would have tasted death, and the two Missouri boys and Sandy would have been riddled with lead from twenty guns.

But at that instant a great noise arose from a point up the street. There were loud and angry voices, followed by a short but rapid discharge of firearms.

Looking out over the heads of the men surrounding them our friends could see that the street was in a great commotion, with people running frantically about and shouting wildly. What the trouble was they could not tell, but, whatever it was, it had attracted the attention of those above them and given them a moment's respite.

"Now, if we could only manage to slip away," Joe thought, and he looked quickly about him to see if there was any possibility of such a thing.

Sandy saw Joe's action and understood, but he only shook his head. Joe did not need Sandy's assurance, however, to make him realize that escape was hopeless. He and his friends were still hemmed in completely, for, though their enemies were interested in the commotion in the street, they did not lose sight of the fact that they had a duty to perform on their own hook. They watched the movements in the street, but they also kept an eye on the Yankees.

Seeing that escape was impossible, Joe fell to speculating on what the fight in the street might mean. That it was a battle between the Government people and the insurgents he did not doubt. That much he took for granted.

He was further confident that it was an attempt on the part of the Government people to rescue himself and his friends. This was a most natural supposition in view of all that had gone before, and he had counted all along on something of the kind taking place. That there was to be an attempt at rescue he did not doubt, but whether or not it would succeed was another matter.

He whispered something to that effect to Sandy, and the latter slowly shook his head.

"We can't count on any rescue," he said. "It may be the Government people trying to reach us, but they'll never do it while we are alive."

"Why?" Sam asked.

"For the simple reason that these men will never allow us to live that long. If they find that we are liable to be rescued they will kill us at once."

"Do you think so?"

"I know it."

"Humph! Not a very encouraging prospect."

"No, but what I say is true."

"Then it looks as though we were doomed, any way you take it," Joe said.

"We just about are. My notion is we may as well count ourselves dead men. I don't care so much for myself, either, though I'm not anxious for the villains to cut my cable; but I am sorry for you two, and I guess I ought to be killed for getting you into this scrape. If I had left you alone in New York, or hadn't brought you away from the ship, you would not be in this mess now. I don't see how you chaps can look at me and not wish you could kill me where I stand."

"Oh, stow that," Joe said. "It don't interest us at all. We came with you for better or worse, and whatever comes we will take our medicine together like men. We may all be killed, but, as we said a moment ago, we won't be the only ones to go. We'll take a few of those rascals with us."

"I don't know about that," Sam observed. "Instead of taking them with us I'd rather feel that we had sent them into a different and a warmer land."

"Well, we'll cut their cables and set them adrift on an unknown sea, anyway," Sandy remarked grimly. "It's them and the devil for it after that."

"And may the fates have mercy on the devil!" Joe exclaimed. After a moment he added: "You see that tall, dark fellow over there? Well, he's my meat. The first bullet I fire goes for his heart. I never saw a more villainous-looking scoundrel in my life."

"All right, you can have him," Sandy agreed. "But make sure work of him."

"I'll attend to that, never fear. But listen!"

"The noise in the street had grown to an uproar and the firing of guns had become incessant. It seemed that a fight was in progress in which practically the whole town must be taking a part.

The men guarding the three Yankees became so intensely interested in the fight that they turned their backs on the enemy to watch its progress. But they left no opening for the Yankees to escape. They were packed so close together that a cat could not have passed through their line without attracting attention.

Five minutes passed, then the tall, dark man cried out:

"The Government people are coming! Quick! Kill the Yankees!"

The men whirled about with leveled guns, then stopped with mouths and eyes wide open, too dumfounded to utter a sound.

The Yankees were gone. They had disappeared as completely and mysteriously as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE RESCUER.

The manner of the disappearance of the Yankees was not at all mysterious when once it was understood. On the contrary, it was very simple.

In the wall of the building against which they had been standing there was a large double door. This door, as the Yankees had discovered, and so their enemies well knew, was securely fastened on the inside so that it could not possibly be opened from without. It was through this door that the Yankees had escaped.

But how?

The simplest thing in the world. The door had been opened from within for them. They had passed through, unobserved by their assailants, and the door had been quickly shut and barred again.

The person who had opened the door was a woman. She was a stranger, to our friends, of course, and why she had opened the way for them to escape they did not know. Naturally, they took it for granted that she was a friend of the Government, and that she had saved them on that account.

In this surmise, however, they were mistaken. She had a stronger motive for her action than they supposed, and that motive had nothing to do with public affairs. It was purely and strictly personal.

After passing through the door the Yankees found themselves in a large room which had the appearance of some kind of a warehouse. They were alone save for the woman who had so timely come to their rescue.

They looked at her inquiringly when the door had been secured, but she only shook her head slightly and remained silent, placing her fingers on her lips to enjoin quiet, she glided away softly across the room, motioning them to follow. They obeyed without hesitation, although they had no idea where she would lead them.

Joe did not know how the others felt, but, as for himself, after one look into her eyes, he was ready to obey her every suggestion or command and follow her anywhere she might lead.

She was young and beautiful, and to Joe she seemed the most charming and fascinating creature he had ever seen. To obey her he felt to be not only a duty but a pleasure.

She led the way across the room to another door, through which they passed, to find themselves in a dark passage which appeared to be underground, though whether it was or not they could not tell. Then for the first time she spoke.

And what a voice! Soft, low, musical and sweet. Whatever effect it had on the others. Its effect on Joe was magical. It thrilled him from head to foot, and set his heart to thumping wildly. He felt that to have the privilege of listening to that voice forever would be all the pleasure he could reasonably ask.

"This is a long passage," she said, "and very dark, so we must keep close together. The better way will be for us to join hands and go forward in single file."

She reached out her hand to Joe as she spoke, and when it touched him he grasped it in one of his. Her voice had affected him strangely, but it was nothing compared with the touch of her hand. It intoxicated him and set his brain in a wild tumult. The world and the things of the world faded away, he forgot where he was, forgot the existence of Sam and Sandy, and was conscious of only her. Of all earthly things she alone existed.

It was only by a mighty self-restraint that he refrained from lifting her hand to his lips and kissing it, and in his soul there was a wild desire to take her in his arms and hold her to his breast.

He believed that he was in love. At the least he was madly and desperately infatuated. He was the woman's willing slave, and her influence over him was complete. Whether her influence would prove for good or evil remained to be seen.

With joined hands, and the woman leading the way, they moved along the dark passage. No word was spoken, except once or twice she warned them to press near the wall on the right hand side to avoid a pitfall on the left.

For half an hour they proceeded in this way, then a little speck of light appeared in front of them. They saw it with a feeling of relief, for they knew they were coming to an opening which led out into the world again. Joe, however, did not feel the pleasure at the prospect of the ending of the journey that Sam and Sandy did. In fact, with the woman's soft little hand in his he would have been content to have gone on and on indefinitely. But all things, even our blissful periods, have an ending.

At last the tramp through the dark passage was done, and they stood in the open sunlight in a secluded spot in a retired portion of the town. There were old buildings about them, but they appeared to have been abandoned, and there was no one astir anywhere about.

They stood for a little while in silence, then the woman said:

"You are safe here, and here you must stop for the present. I will go on and tell the Government people where you are and they can send some men to guard you to their camp. You will only have to wait a short time."

There was another short pause, then Joe spoke.

"We want to thank you," he said, "for all you have done for us. You got us out of an ugly situation—you saved our lives. I—I can't find the words to tell you how much we are indebted to you—how much we appreciate what you have done."

She shook her head, while a smile, half pleased and half sad, came to her lips.

"What I did was nothing," she said. "It was only what any woman might have done for her countrymen in trouble."

"Countrymen!" Joe exclaimed. "Then you are from the United States?"

"Yes, your country is mine," she replied, and there was a tone of sadness in her voice.

"We are more than ever pleased to have met you, then," Joe said, though whether he could have been more pleased is doubtful. "I cannot understand, though, how you have come to be mixed up in this revolution."

"I am not mixed up in it, exactly," she replied. "This is the first time I have taken any part in it at all, and I did not do this for the sake of the Government."

"You did it, then, merely because we are of the United States?"

"Yes; and because I could not remain quiet and allow you to be butchered."

"How did you happen to be in the right place at the right time to save us?"

"Oh, that was easy. I live just across the street from where you were, and I saw the whole trouble. I knew you would be killed if something were not done, so I ran over to the building, came in the back way and opened the door for you."

"I see. But did you not take great risks?"

"Oh, if I had been seen there might have been some risk, but fortunately I was not seen."

"No; but still you risked your life for us."

"Please don't speak of that. It was nothing."

"It was very much to us. But for you we would not be living now."

"No, you would not be living now," she repeated thoughtfully. "They meant murder, and nothing short of that would have satisfied them."

"But some of them would have been satisfied for good and all," Sam observed. "We should have attended to that, all right."

"And that tall, dark rascal would have been one of that number," Joe added. "I had him singled out for my first shot, and I would have made sure work of him."

The woman said nothing, but she turned deathly pale, and her hands clasped and unclasped nervously. Once or twice she opened her lips as if to speak, but no sound came from them.

Joe looked at her in wonder, understanding that his words were the cause of his distress, but unable to surmise how they had caused it.

Could it be possible, he asked himself, that she stood in any relationship to the tall, dark man? If so, what could that relationship be? Of different nationalities, they could scarcely be kindred. Could it be possible that there was a still stronger tie binding them? Could they possibly be lovers? He shuddered and sickened at the thought. He would not not believe such a thing. It was contrary to the fitness of things.

He could not ask her for an explanation, for he remembered that she was little more than a stranger to him, yet he would have given the world to know what she had to do with the tall man or he with her.

After a long silence he said:

"Are you, like me, merely a visitor to this country, or do you live here?"

She drew a deep sigh and a shade of sorrow passed over her face.

"I live here now," she replied simply.

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So sure am I of this Restorative that I authorize certain Druggists everywhere to supply it on a month's trial, to practically all who write me for that privilege.

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The cost is but $5.50 for six bottles, including my professional help during treatment.

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But all druggists do not supply it on a month's trial. You must write to me for that.

"But you have not forgotten your own country?" he asked.

"Never. It is the grandest country in the world, and it will always have the first place in my heart."

"Then you are a true American?"

"Always."

"You have proved as much in saving our lives. I had supposed you did that for political reasons, but I am glad to find you did it because we are of your country."

"And because you are human beings."

"Yes."

"Have you lived here long?"

"Nearly a year."

"Your parents live here, I presume?"

"No. *My* parents are dead. At least I presume so. I never knew them. I was raised an orphan."

"You have relatives here, then?"

"No. I have no relatives anywhere, so far as I know."

"Then why do you remain in this outlandish, heathenish place, if I may ask, with no relatives and no ties to bind you?"

"But there is a tie to bind me."

"There is? What can it be?"

She blushed and her head dropped and her whole attitude became forlorn and dejected. In low tones she murmured:

"It is my husband."

CHAPTER IX.
JOE MAKES A VOW.

"It is my husband."

It is queer what a different effect a few simple words like that have on different people. To Sam and Sandy that speech meant no more than if she had said, "I would like a drink of water." But it was not so with Joe. To him it was as if she had condemned him to death.

He asked himself what difference it could make to him whether she was married or not, so long as they were strangers, and he had as much as known her number, and he could not find an answer to his question. He knew that it did make a difference, and that she could scarcely have said anything that would have cut him deeper.

Her husband!

He wondered what kind of man he was, and if she loved him. He was almost confident she did not, and he was quite confident he did not know. Perhaps it was because he was confident of this. It is easy to make the wish father the thought.

"I must go now," she was breaking a long silence. "I am glad to have been of use to you, and I hope you won't get into any more trouble. If you need men to your aid and you will not have to wait here very long."

"We want to extend to you our heartfelt thanks before you leave us," Joe said, "and we further wish to assure you that if there is ever any service we can render you we are entirely at your service if you will command us. You saved our lives, and we shall be grateful for anything our lives, at your service."

She did not reply at once, but for almost a minute remained quietly in an attitude of earnest thought. When at last she did speak it seemed from her saying:

"Just now there is nothing I can ask of you, but I thank you for your kind offer, and some day I may avail myself of it." Then, turning to my men, she inquired whether to say more, then suddenly turning away said abruptly:

"Well, good-by."

She had taken but a step or two when Joe called to her again.

"We should be glad to meet your husband, and if you will kindly tell us where he can be found we will find it a pleasure to call on him."

She stopped and turned about, her face blanched and a painful expression about her eyes.

"I am sorry," she replied, "but I hardly think that will be possible, either you or my husband to meet now. Again, good-by."

She walked on and passed out of sight while the three men stood silent, gazing after her in astonishment. After a while Sandy drew a long breath and exclaimed:

"Well, shiver my timbers! That is one of the queerest crafts I ever saw sailing the waters, and one of the trimmest and smuggest, too. What do you make of her, mates?"

"She is a nice-looking woman," Sam replied, or, rather I should say girl, for she can't be more than eighteen years old."

Joe turned upon Sam half angrily.

"Nice looking!" he repeated. "Humph! I should think she is! Why, she's the queen of womanhood. She's the prettiest and grandest woman I ever saw. She's an angel."

Sam looked surprised for an instant, then he smiled knowingly, and shook his ragged his head and chuckled softly to himself.

"Ohol A case of love at first sight," Sam said presently. "I say, old fellow, she must have hit you hard."

"She did," Joe acknowledged manfully. "I am in love with her with all my heart and soul."

There was a short silence, then Sam said gravely:

"I am sorry for you, Joe, but I hope you will make a conquest."

Joe whirled about and stared at Sam fixedly.

"Get over it!" he exclaimed. "Never! More, I don't want to get over it. And I don't want any of your pity, I love her, I'm going to keep on loving her, and I am going to win her."

"But you forget, Joe, that she has a husband already."

"No, I don't forget. But what do I care for her husband? She is mine. She was created for me. She is mine. She *shall* be."

Sam held up his hand.

"Hold on, Joe," he cried. "We are friends and will remain friends so long as we travel the straight and narrow road. But if you are going to forget your honor and try to break in where you have no right, why, that's your affair, and will not sanction or countenance any effort on your part to accomplish such a thing. I think a good can come of it, and I won't have for a friend a man who will do such a thing. You hear me."

"Yes, I hear you; and now you hear me. In the first place, don't look for a fool. In the next place, wait until I try to separate a man and his wife. I have never attempted a thing like that and I never shall attempt it."

"Then how are you going to get her?"

"I shall simply wait until she is free. She shall be free, and I shall win her, I tell my heart. She will be free and without my intervention, for I am sure I don't know if we were destined for each other, and that no power on earth could keep us apart. I'll wait, then, for I am in no hurry. I have no fear on that score."

"Well," Sam replied, "I have nothing to say." Sam replied.

"Then I will have the proper clearance papers and a clean bill of lading," Sandy added, "up anchor and set sail for whatever port you may choose. Now, then, let's be across your bows and ask for any accounting, that's all."

"I wonder what the woman's name is," Sam said. "I should have asked of a chap for a husband."

"I asked her that at the first," Joe replied, "but, as to the latter, I think I know who her husband is. It is largely guesswork, of course, but I think I know who he is."

"Who is the man?" Sandy asked.

"Why, Nakuka, the native you had selected out there for my first shot."

"Whew-ee! That villain!" Sandy exclaimed.

"That villain," Joe repeated.

"Humph! Well, I guess that's so!"

"I formed my opinion from the way she acted when I mentioned his name. I noticed that moment that there was some relationship existing between them, but I did not know what it was, but when she said she had a husband I realized in an instant that he was the man."

"There was a short pause, then Sam said thoughtfully:

"You may be correct, Joe, but I'm inclined to think you misunderstood it in that light."

"Why not?" Joe asked.

"Well, I can't see why a woman, young, pretty, and evidently of good birth, as I would marry such a man as that fellow. Why, Nakuka is a beast. He is worse than a snake and a dove."

"Not a bit more," Sandy agreed. "She's one of the neatest, cleanest, trimmest little vessels I ever saw; and if he ain't the rakishest, dirtiest, and most villainous looking black dog you may shiver my topsis. It is my belief that when she was brought here she conveyed by a craft like him the clearance papers and bill of lading."

"You have hit my thoughts, exactly," Joe replied. "I believe she is married to that man, but I believe, too, that there is some crooked work in the affair somewhere. What that crooked work is we must find out if possible. To my mind one thing is very clear, and that is that she is not free."

"Well, I should hope not," Sam said, earnestly. "I would have a mighty poor opinion of her character if she were free and did love such a man as that."

"I don't understand, I don't know much about," Sandy observed, "as I have never had the honor of meeting the woman, but I would show any man that it ain't according to nature for her to voluntarily cast anchor alongside of such a craft as that if his wife there's something crooked about the affair somewhere."

"There is something crooked," Joe repeated, "and I am going to find out what it is. She has been wronged in some way and it shall be my business to right that wrong. She shall be righted, and she shall be made free; and, more than that, she shall become my wife. You follow me on those terms if you choose, you can leave this country at the first opportunity, but here I stay until I have accomplished this purpose, and when I sail from these shores she goes with me."

Next week another installment of this story of love and fighting will appear in the Ledger. Our patterns and cameras are still offered free to each subscriber, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

More men would have indigestion if forced to eat their words.

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A TALE OF OLD JAPAN.

[From the Japanese of Saikaku, who wrote nearly two hundred years ago.]

There was once a Saimurai who went by the name of Naimuke Hyoda and rented a cottage near the Wistaria tea house in Shinagwa. Being out of service, he was very poor, and had to go hungry for cold mornings, and there were evenings near the end of the year when the light of a lamp could not be seen in his house.

It was indeed a melancholy ending for the year, but there was his wife's brother, Eelan Nakarai by name, a physician who lived on the side street by Myoju shrine in Kanda, and to him Naisuke sent a letter asking aid. The physician was moved by this letter, which was by no means the first of its kind, but he had no heart to refuse the request and so wrapped ten rops in a paper and wrote:

"Gold currency, the best remedy for pecuniary embarrassment and an efficient cure for temporary distress."

This package he sent to Naisuke's wife. Of course Naisuke was surprised and he immediately sent out invitations for the new year's party to his intimate friends Samurai, who was out of service like himself.

A lucky snowfall lent enchantment to the evening, and opening the hitherto forsaken wood gate he hospitably ushered in seven guests. The sleeves of their paper frocks—for like many other poverty-stricken Samurai, they were obliged to wear outer garments made of paper—were laid in a row neatly at the entrance of a gentleman should be; and their ancient coats, though tattered and torn, were somehow endowered of the better days they had seen.

When the usual libations were over the host said:

"I have been fortunate enough to receive help in my embarrassment and am able to enjoy the new year with my friends to my heart's content."

They all said it was an enviable piece of good fortune. Then he produced the package of money and pointed to the inscription on the wrapper.

"What humor!" they cried, as they handed it from one to the other.

The coin was passed from its repeated rounds and at last, apologizing for having sat so long, and saying that he had had a hard time chasing the old year into oblivion, they began to sing a farewell song.

Then they began to study the warring pan of the sake and the mince meat pot, and then collected the pieces of gold, passing them from hand to hand, and begged the host to explain the matter.

One piece was lacking, however, out of the ten, and so they all left their places, took their shoes, which before and behind, until at last it was a settled fact that the coin was gone, and they acquainted the host of the fact.

At this the man who had occupied the first place began untying his belt and removing his garmentsia, and the host followed his example. The third, who had hitherto sat silent and crestfallen, thereupon sat up and said:

"This is affliction one has to meet with in this transient world. There is no need for my shaking myself, for I am unfortunate enough to have a rat on my person. Most unexpectedly I feel myself bound to renounce my life."

When they heard this resolute decision they all said with one accord:

"That may not be the case with you alone. Being in straitened circumstances does not make the possession of one rol impossible. We know you to be a man of honor."

"The way in which I came into possession of the money," said the unfortunate Samurai, "is indeed as plain as can be, for only yesterday I sold a kouska (an ornamental knife set in the sheath of a sword)' of Tokujo workmanship to Jusaemon Kanemoneya for a rol and a half, but it is the unlucky coincidence, as you must all admit. For the sake of our friendship, therefore, be so good as to search for the money after I have killed myself. I only beg last request—that you will thus take away the reproach from my memory."

His hand was on the leather-covered hilt of his sword before the last word died on his lips. But just then there arose a voice was heard saying, "Here is the coin," and a hand was put out from underneath the shade of a paper lantern. In the semi-darkness the company did not notice who it was.

Happiness and honor were thus restored to everybody's relief, and they all said there was nothing like making sure.

But the hostess now called out from the inner chamber that she had found the coin, and she handed it out on the lid of a lacquered box. She had served some boiled taro in the box and the moisture had made the coin stick to the lid.

The number of the coins was thus increased to nine, and the guests congratulated their host on the increase of his treasure as being a good omen. But the host replied:

"Good here, comrades. There were 3 coins, a search was made for the tenth and now here are eleven pieces. The natural conclusion is that one of you, who happened to have the money, produced it a while ago to relieve me from my distress, and keep the extra coin. It must go back to the owner."

Nobody made an answer, since all were embarrassed and could not leave, although the night waned until the time of cock crowing. At last a man arose who had given the coin must not confess, as he would be obliged thereby to renounce his life because he had embarrassed his friends.

And all these host entreated them to trust him to extricate them from their dilemma. They answered that they would be glad to leave the matter wholly to his management.

Thereupon he deposited the coin at the bottom of a square measure, placed it over the whole and put out in the yard, and said to the company:

That one of you who is the owner of the rol will please take it on your round bone. The others, of course, will not look in the measure."

He then made each guest go out alone, and when he had satisfied himself that those behind could not see whether he took the coin. After thus dismissing all his seven visitors in this manner, he, in hand, stepped outside and looked at the measure. The coin was gone. Then he went home and to the others, had taken it away.

Nobody knew who the owner was, however, and how delicate the behavior of the guests! Such is a specimen of the polite intercourse between Samurai, to whom honor is everything.

Pointed Paragraphs.

Beware of the woman who is convinced she is easily deceived.

Any man can easily make a fool of himself; all he has to do is to act kittenish.

If the dowager to buy furniture now than it is to carry on a prolonged courtship.

A romantic girl is apt to tire of fiction before she leaves, and marries about a year.

The harder it is to get a man to make a promise the easier it is to get him to make good.

If a woman loves a horse she is apt to love her husband—or anything else she can drive.

Money doesn't always bring happiness, but the average man is willing to take chances along with the money.

As a matter of course, the drum major belongs to the band, but he gives one the impression that the band belongs to him.

THE WIZARD OF CATOCTIN;

OR, LOVE AND WAR IN MARYLAND.

By T. C. HARBAUGH, author of "Redcoat and Rebel," "Daughter or Jezebel," Etc.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE CHALLENGE.

Within the last few hours the old taproom of the South Mountain House had become a scene of activity. Long lines of gray-clad men had passed in front of the place and officers of rank were inside discussing the figures to be had there. Billy the bartender was in his element, for he was a sympathizer with the South, though he took charity the money with which the drinks were paid for.

Artillery had rumbled by and cavalry galloped past the old inn, while the Southerners who had come up from Zittlestown, including the redoubtable Polk himself, looked on with undisguised glee.

All day the Confederate army had swept over Catoctin Mountain and debouched into the paradise valley which stretched from its base past the creek of the same name, to and at the foot of the other range soon to become immortalized in history as a field of battleground.

It was near night when the rear guard of the army under Hill reached the mountain. They expected pursuit. Buttery's men unlimbered for the struggle, and fighting ground picked out by old campaigners with the greatest care.

At the hotel on the summit a young-looking officer in a major's gray braid sauntered the counter with one hand resting lightly on his sword hilt. At the same time he had been seeing Polk Zittle and suddenly, as if a flash of memory had enlightened him, he started and said:

"You, sir!" he said as he touched the mountaineer's sleeve. "Aren't you Polk Zittle?"

"That's my name, sir; never had another that I know of."

"I thought so. Don't you know me?"

"Your face looks familiar enough, sir."

"I'm Foy."

"Ho! the young chap what got winged on the mountain two years ago?" exclaimed Polk.

"The same. I'm back, you see."

Zittle looked Captain Foy over from head to foot and seemed to draw his own conclusions.

Foy drew the Gray Fox to one side and the next moment they stood under a tree beyond the inn.

"How is she now?" he eagerly asked, for he did not tell Zittle that within the last few hours he had received his first letter from the Mountain Wolves.

"As you're likely to see her soon, I hardly need answer that question."

Foy bit his lip.

"Let me ask one. What's become of Harland?"

"He's the dog on the trail just now," grimly smiled the young rebel captain.

"You haven't met since Duke night on the mountain?"

"Once, but he escaped me. It was at Seven Pines."

"And he thinks you're not likely to get away from him now?" said Polk laughed.

"I shan't shun him," was the reply. "Harland Blake, the Yankee soldier, will find in me a foeman worthy of his steel."

"I hope so."

"But this is getting away from our real subject. When did you see Lorna last?"

"Perhaps yesterday, perhaps not for six months."

"Come, Zittle, I am under obligations to you for carrying me down the mountain after that duel, and for saving my life, too. It was a good trait in you, and now that I'm back with my head just as full of this mountain beauty as it was then—"

Polk Zittle uttered an ejaculation which caused Foy to break his sentence.

"By Jove!" cried the young captain, "don't you move any of my love-making on the mountain in time of war?"

"No!" blurted the mountaineer. "I don't allow any interference, sir grap, to interfere with mine."

Foy looked amazed.

"With yours?" he exclaimed. "Is it possible that you have your eyes on the same girl?"

"No man shall come between me and Lorna of the mountain," flashed Zittle.

"What does she say to that?"

"I haven't asked her, and I don't need to."

"Oh!" cried the Southerner, with a fearless toss of the head, "I like opposition. Love-making without a rival is too tame for me. We like rivals in the South. It adds a man's blood to meet with opposition, and I believe that no woman should be tamely won. So I have to regard you as my rival for the hand of the beauty of Maryland?"

The soldier's utter sang froid, his consummate coolness, almost floored Polk Zittle.

There was not a particle of fear in the deep blue eyes of the young Captain.

Zittle could not best down his rage.

"Mebbe you would like to fight me for her," he exclaimed.

"This is not a time for personal encounters for the sake of love," was the reply.

"I can break every bone in your body."

A gleam of humor seemed to light up the depths of Foy's eyes. He calmly surveyed the man before him and touched Zittle on the shoulder.

"Won't you go in and have something?" he asked.

"With the devil sooner than with you!" was the swift reply. "I tell you, sir, right here, that I allow no interference with my love-making."

"Then I'll interfered!"

"You have. I'll see you later, perhaps, and if you persist, that uniform which I adore because of its color and what it represents will not save you."

"That's almost a threat."

"I can't make it stronger," cried Polk. "I haven't got the gift of gab you people have, but, by heavens! if you persist in making love to Lorna Wizard, I'll deal with you as I would with the meanest prowling Yankee in the army now crossing the mountain. Are you built now, sir?"

"I don't fight bullies," came from between Foy's clenched teeth. "And since you have made a threat which has one of your infernal snakes, let me tell you to keep out of Foy's way."

Polk Zittle gave the speaker a dark, menacing look and turned on his heel.

Foy watched him. Buttery's men touched by some one, and the next moment ground picked out by old campaigners with the greatest care.

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Polk Zittle gave the speaker a dark, menacing look and turned on his heel.

Foy watched him. Buttery's men touched by some one, and the next moment ground picked out by old campaigners with the greatest care.

A flush suffused his face as he turned to open it. He doubted not it was from Lorna.

In one corner of the long, low tap-room he opened the crumpled note and to his astonishment found these words:

"Captain Ruthven Foy, C. S. A.:—Why don't you quit your spying and let a fellow catch up with you? Are you going to hand back into Virginia without a fight? I hope we will see you. Meanwhile the mountains don't have it out for good. And if you see the loyal Lorna, please remember the respects of yours truly,

"HARLAND BLAKE, U. S. A."

With darkening brow Captain Foy read the note for the second time.

How it had gotten through the lines to halt him at South Mountain House he did not know. But there it was in a hand, written by his Northern rival, Harland Blake. The note was dated that morning and bore no address. He uttered an oath and tore the missive into a thousand pieces.

"No, I'm not going back into Virginia without a meeting with you, Harland Blake," he muttered. "And the boy who handed me the note?"

Foy turned and took for the urchin in the crowd, but he was not to be found. Then he went outside, knit his brow and to curse anew the foe in blue who had taunted him in black and white—his old rival for the hand of Lorna Wizard, the Queen of the Mountain. He could not meet Harland Blake too soon.

CHAPTER X.

BROUGHT TO BAY.

Despite the sudden appearance of the great range of mountains, with here and there little villages and cleared fields, there were few places over which Lee's invading army might almost hide. The deep gorges, the ground swells and the crags that towered above them, the miles of tree-covered space seemed to be a terrible picturesqueness to the territory.

The coming of the Confederate army, a part of which had crossed the mountains to the valleys on the other side, had thrown the inhabitants into a state of excitement and terror.

In the small isolated cabin standing not far from South Mountain House a dozen men had congregated. They looked determined, like men who had come to stay—the majority were not past thirty, though several white-haired men in their midst. They were mountaineers of acknowledged bravery, and to whose ranks many lovers of the Mountain Wolves, some of whom the reader has already encountered, and they had gathered at this old shanty to organize for what Union cause in the coming battle.

They were, and for some time had been, a foil to the Gray Foxes, an organization of men to whose ranks many were with the South, and on more than one occasion there had been outbreaks between the two bands.

The short, cold night of March day was gathering and the shadows of the hills had commingled among the pines. The rebel army held possession of the fighting ground, and by daybreak on the morrow the test of strength would be had.

The Wolves had resolved to hang on the flanks of the invading army and do whatever service they could, but hatred of the Foxes so burned in their bosoms that they yearned to meet their old home enemies in mortal combat.

They knew that the Wizard of Catoctin was loyal. More than once his advice had benefited them, and they felt that in the coming battle Warlock would prove in his way a tower of strength to the Union cause.

The twilight deepened. An owl hooted in the forest behind the cabin and the shrill scream of the night-hawk penetrated to their secret conclave as some soldiers frightened her from her mountain nest.

"Come, boys, all of you swear again eternal fidelity to the Union," cried the leader of the Wolves.

"Tomorrow we must prove our mettle in deadly conflict and let not one Wolf fail to do his duty. We may not all meet again at this altar, some unpleasantly, and if we shed the blood we shed will help to cement together the States into one indissoluble country."

The men sprang forward and in the dusk that prevailed the interior of the cabin raised their right hands while their leader spoke the oath of fidelity.

As the uplifted hands fell again to the sides of their owners the door of the shack fell inward and all sprang for their guns.

"It is the Wizard's ward!" cried one. "It is Lorna. Hands down, men!"

The young girl who had thus rudely disturbed the Mountain Wolves had halted in the middle of the room and was looking at their leader. Her face was white and startled by excitement and all saw that she had come to the cabin with a startling message.

"You have been betrayed!" cried Lorna. Men of the Mountain, even now the death circle is tightening around you. Hide in your old foes, aided by the soldiers in gray, are coming to you. You have not a moment to lose."

"Lorna, my child, girl!"

"I saw the moving shapes in the woods. They crept from crag to crag, from gorge to gorge, like the ghosts of departed warriors without souls. They are now out yonder. Fly, fly, I say! You must meet the enemy!"

"Fly!" exclaimed the leader of the Wolves. "It may not be in the power of many if we are surrounded the foe shall feel the bite of the mountain Wolves to his sorrow."

He opened the door and peered out. Beyond the garnets threshold the ghostly stillness of death reigned. The cold, bitter night air had a screech among the pines and the night-hawk had flown away.

"They are here," almost whispered the man as he closed the door and turned to his companions. "I heard footfalls out yonder."

Lorna's face glowed with firmness.

She had taken a dagger from her bosom and, wrapping her white fingers about the handle, stood near the rough door in the center. The men looked first at her and then at another.

"One with old Warlock's blood in her should be a match for him," said some one scarcely above a whisper.

"And Lorna is one."

"What's that, Cyrus Koogle?" said the young girl.

"But you said, didn't you, that I have the blood of the Wizard of Catoctin in my veins?"

"Who ever told you that?"

The young girl faced turned away and held his tongue. But a slight sneer of pleasure crept and swept over Lorna's face. It was one of doubt and fear, however.

"No," said she, "I am not of his blood. I cannot be. I—I—suppose I am." She paused as if she found herself upon forbidden ground. "We shall waive this subject, only let me say that I hope that we shall not be surrounded me from early childhood will soon be at hand on the boundary sun."

Then she turned again to the door and watched the face of the captain of the Wolves.

Outside all was silent.

Suddenly, however, a strange but distinct bird cry entered the shack and the men looked into each other's faces.

The Captain smiled.

"The signal!" said Lorna in a whisper. "No mountain bird ever ended her call just like that."

The men about her nodded approval.

At the end of another minute a human voice rose beyond the guarded door.

"Ho! You inside there, open the door and surrender!"

The Mountain Wolves gritted their teeth and came closer together like a Spartan band.

"Did you hear? We are ten to one and we have you surrounded on every side."

Still not a word from the mountaineers in the hut.

"Very well. If you will not surrender, let the girl out and we will fight you."

Lorna sprang to the door and laid her hand on the rude wooden latch that held it shut. The long blade of the dagger rested along her shapely arm.

She stood like a modern Boadicea in the dusk that prevailed, her bosom rising and falling as her breath came and went in suppressed excitement.

"They must not slay you with us," said the Captain of the Wolves. "You are a woman. We will let you out."

"To surrender to the enemies of the Union!" cried Lorna, reproachfully. "No, no, no, never then!"

She turned to the door and put her lips close to the crevice there.

"The girl lives or dies with her friends!" she said in a clear voice. "If you want us come and take us. Long live the American Union, and forever float the flag of Washington in Maryland!"

The men grouped in the hut applauded these defiant words with a shout which died away among the somber trees beyond the door. For another moment all was still on the outside, then a voice which until then had not been heard exclaimed:

"If that is your defiance die like the rabble of the Roundheads!"

The volley that followed was deafening and the dense smoke rolled in on the hinges, for the leaden missiles had plunged through the logs behind which the mountaineers. Another volley like that and there would be no portal at all.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GHOST OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

Fortunately for the Wolves had thrown themselves flat on the rude floor of the old hut and the bullets, passing over them, buried themselves harmlessly in the logs beyond. It was a breathless moment. The leader of the Wolves stood erect, and in the darkness of those, outside and before another volley could be fired, he threw open the splintered door he was on his feet and at the portal.

"Follow me!" he cried. "Each man for himself after we have struck the enemy. Charge!"

The door recoiled as if by magic, and like a stone launched from a catapult the Wolves burst into the night.

A wild yell followed their exit, and in a moment more they were in the midst of the foe.

The fight that followed was brief. By the aid of the moon was hand to hand and desperate.

Blows were taken and given with the fierceness of men fighting for life and a principle, but the Wolves found themselves outnumbered. They were speedily hemmed in on all sides, but desperately they fought with the fury of demons, stretching more than one figure in death on the ground and tinging the grass another hue.

The command given for them to separate as was the command of their leader for new enemies appeared each second and they were forced back and back on the declivity, disputing every inch of soil until their doom seemed sure.

As for Lorna, she caught up the musket of a fallen foe and, with fire in her eye, the glittering bayonet, white in her eye gleamed the fierceness of despair.

Suddenly a loud cry was sent up from the ranks of the rebels, and one of them was pointed at with his face turned to his foe and he trembled from head to foot.

"It is the ghost!" cried a dozen demon of the dead! Look, men, and fight if you will against such an enemy as that!"

Standing not far off rather than most men, with the moonbeams on a terrible face, was a specter-like figure enough to drive the blood from the heart of the bravest.

The mystic figure moved, nor spake, but with a pair of long arms extended and fingers parted it stared at the combatants.

"The Hills of God are eternal and the valleys lay beneath Him!" said a sepulchral voice. "Woe to the men who dye His grass with the life-blood of their fellow men. The death of the disobedient shall be theirs and their souls shall wander forever without a habitation in the hereafter."

The tones, terrible to all who heard, reached the ears and near. The echoes of that awful voice seemed to quaver the boughs

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of the trees around and the affrighted men drew away, forgetting in the subdued excitement of the moment the passions of war.

The apparition advanced and the speech-less men fell back as from the march of a pestilence.

Suddenly a bluish flame played round the head of the Unknown; it grew in density until it seemed to envelop the whole creature and beneath it was seen the distorted features of the Terror.

"The ghost of South Mountain!" cried Polk Zittle, as he threw down his rifle and fell back in terror. The soldiers appears, but when it does it brings destruction upon all who confront it. It is surely the demon of the gorge."

The fear became infectious. Wolves and Foxes alike fell back and in a short time the most courageous who glanced over their shoulders as they went pell-mell down the mountain saw standing there the sole possessor of the ground, the apparition of the night.

"What was it? You live here and you know," cried the terrified captain as he clutched Zittle's shoulder and brought him to a stand some distance from the battleground.

"God knows, Captain."

"Foxes alike fell back and in a short time the most courageous who glanced over their shoulders as they went pell-mell down the mountain saw standing there the sole possessor of the ground, the apparition of the night.

"What was it? You live here and you know," cried the terrified captain as he clutched Zittle's shoulder and brought him to a stand some distance from the battleground.

"God knows, Captain."

"There are no such things as ghosts."

"Then, in Heaven's name, why didn't you stand and face it?"

"I never saw its like before."

"We that who live on the mountain. Occasionally it appears and disappears."

"It is a ghost."

"Then go up there and tell it so."

But the Confederate drew back and shuddered. He looked up the mountain and saw again the terror of the night, then, as if a new dread seized him, he beat a retreat, other retreat, nor stopped till he could fortify himself by the bar of the South Mountain House.

As for the Wolves, they had fortunately escaped with but little loss.

When they came together some distance from the scene of the desperate struggle they counted their numbers and found that they had but two. They felt that they had dealt some telling blows and that silent forms were lying up the slope who would never again lift a hand against the perpetuity of the Union.

Lorna stood in the doorway of her mountain home. She had made her way down the mountain to the cabin and was listening to the sounds about her. She could see here and there the camp-fires of the Confederate army and hopefully she turned and looked across the valley of the Catoctin from whence aid and deliverance should come.

Presently footsteps weer heard and she saw the tall form of the Wizard approaching.

As Warlock came up he smiled a little and, smoothing out his long arms, said:

"The Philistines are camped round about and their hosts are overcome. They have come up from the land of Philistia, but the sons of the Most High overrun the mountain tomorrow. And woe to the hosts of the South! Where have you been, child?" and he glanced down at Lorna's bedraggled garments.

"I have been out on the mountain," answered she girl.

"Out among the camp-fires of the foe, eh? And what did you see?"

Lorna's mind was still filled with the events of the night and she thought only of the spectral helper upon whom she had gazed with strange feelings.

"I saw where they are encamped."

"And know them their forces?"

"Yes."

"Ah, you know the mountains like a goat!" cried Warlock. "You must be my messenger, child."

"To whom?"

"To the General who leads the hosts of the Union."

"But I know not where to find him."

"The God of Divination will guide you. The horse is down there."

"The horse, father?"

"The horse of the foe. I have him well in hand for you. He will respond to your command as he has responded to those of his late master."

"His late master?" echoed the girl, turning pale. "Then you have encountered——"

"Say no more. Fry into my secrets. Come! We will find the horse."

Warlock, taking Lorna's hand, led her by a circuitous path to a spot not far from the cabin where, tethered to young oak, they found a horse. He helped her upon his back and laid his hand on her knee.

"Now go down the mountain and beyond. You will find the Union army somewhere between Boonsboro and Frederick, perchance in Middletown. You will tell the General how the Philistines are posted and all you know of them. Let nothing stop you, child. If the enemy stand in your path, say nay, chide them if you can not do this then——Here, use this but at the last moment," and Lorna felt a revolver thrust into her hand.

Her white teeth met firmly as she gathered up the reins.

"For God and the Union!" said Warlock as he struck the steed with his open hand and the next moment the girl was gone.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOUNTAIN WITCH'S RIDE.

The Wizard of Catoctin never spake truer words than he said that Lorna knew the trails of the Blue Ridge.

She had been from early childhood—or ever since her strange coming to the mountain under the charge of the woman Theresa —hemmed in by the gorges and knolls of those eternal hills.

Many a time once she had ridden over the ground to Frederick, galloping through the streets of Middletown and with a fair specter, her hair streaming behind her and the observed of the citizens there.

She accepted the dangerous mission in good spirit. The dangers that lay before her she did not underrate, for she would be compelled, as she knew, to pass through the Confederate lines, and the brave soldiers of the South were on the watch.

Fortunately, she did not fear Polk Zittle, for she had seen him fly affrighted from the presence of the Terror at the old hut, and she doubted not that he was somewhere hiding from that terrible apparition, somewhere among the crags.

The horse proved gentle enough. The animal seemed to feel that he carried beauty and innocence on his back, for he stumbled not as she guided him down the winding paths to strike at last ground more level and less insecure.

The revolver she had concealed in her bosom, where also reposed the knife, and, thus equipped for defense, she pursued her way.

She had witnessed the placing of the pickets of the rebel army and felt that she could avoid them. Still there was great danger of running into the lines of death, but, undaunted, with the cause she was serving deep in her heart, she pushed on.

On both sides she heard the half-suppressed murmur of the camps. Now and then she caught the gleams of the campfires and noted where they stretched, telling her that the whole mountain, as it were, was in possession of the foe.

She reached a bend in the road just before it struck the turnpike, and suddenly reined in her horse.

In another second she heard some one at the side and then a hand was laid on her thigh.

"Which way, girl!" said a man's voice.

It thrilled Lorna through and through. "I am going into the valley," she answered, keeping her spirits. "I live down there."

"In the village over yonder?"

"No, between here and it."

"But you have been on dangerous ground and we dare not trust more than half of you Marylanders."

Lorna knew that she had fallen into the

"You!" he exclaimed.

hands of a little outpost, for she now caught sight of several shadowy forms near by, as if supporting the speaker.

The crisis had come.

"We'll have to detain you, Miss, till we can send to the Captain. Captain Foy is just to the right of us and——"

Lorna uttered a little cry she could not suppress. Captain Foy, her lover? His were the hands she would have fallen into last.

"I do not want to be detained, sir," she answered, calmly. "I am Etta Southron."

"Oh, of the Souths up the mountain?"

"If you please, sir. They are cousins of mine, and——"

"Then you are all of one opinion about this war."

Before Lorna could speak again another voice said:

"Here comes Captain Foy now."

Lorna felt a little cry she could not suppress. Her heart gave her one bound into her throat.

"If he sees me I am lost!" she thought. "Lost! and the battle as well, perhaps."

The following moment she leaned forward almost on the neck of her horse.

"Now or never," she said under her breath, and swiftly she dealt the man nearest her a blow across the face with the switch she carried for a whip, and then struck the horse a ringing blow.

The animal sprang away like an arrow fired from an elaborn bow.

The shadowy forms in her front were scattered like chaff and the loose rocks flew from beneath her charger's feet as she heard a loud command behind here.

"A Yankee spy! Fire!"

Half a dozen shots smote the darkness in her rear; she heard the whistle of bullets about her head, but on, on she rode down the pike, the hoofs of the horse sounding clearly in the night.

"If there are cavalry behind me I am in for it," said the girl to herself as she urged the black on to still greater speed. "This horse has gallantry. Perhaps he has distanced the best cavalry horses in the Union service."

On, on over the turnpike, with but one thought uppermost in her mind, went the witch of the mountain.

She looked back now and then and listened, but no sounds of pursuit thrilled her soul. The ground between South Mountain and Middletown in not level; there are hills and hollows, but Lorna stayed for neither. She soon caught sight of the lights of the little village ahead.

It was not long before she rode into Middletown. She did not know whether it was still held by an outpost of the enemy or not, but she took no heed of her.

If she had only known she need not have ridden that far, for she had passed a part of the Union army camped in the fields between the village and the mountain.

The people of the village were still up. Lights gleamed everywhere, and especially in the old hotel, Lorna rode up to the antiquated building and looked around. A number of officers were in sight and the picture of a young girl seated on an army horse bearing the unmistakable trappings of a Confederate charger drew attention to her.

"By heavens! the old Wizard's girl!" exclaimed a rough voice as a man ran down the steps of the hotel porch and caught Lorna's bridle.

"Hands off, sir!"

Old Monitors as Targets.

Following closely in the lead set by Great Britain, the United States Government has decided to use some of its oldest vessels for target practice, for the drilling and experience of the gunners and officers of modern war vessels, says the Brooklyn Eagle. The first vessel to be put to this use is the old Civil War monitor, the Montauk. Her keel was laid in 1862 by John Ericsson, of Brooklyn. She is of 1,891 tons displacement, 200 feet long and forty-six in beam. At present she is out of commission, in the League Island navy yard. It is proposed to tow her to the Brooklyn navy yard and put her through such repairs and changes as will better prepare her for the battering she is to receive. This is a new thing as the British Government has been doing for some years, and which has occasioned no little comment. It will give the men-of-war practice in firing at shooting targets, and, further, and primarily, it will allow of observations to be made regarding the effect of modern projectiles.

Upon reaching the Brooklyn navy yard she will be moored and look as much like a cruiser as possible. Armor will be placed on her as well as she will carry, and then she will be taken probably up in the sound and filled full of holes, both above and below. Rapid and slow-fire guns will be used from above; the torpedo tubes will send their destructive fish against her, and the whole operation will be watched and recorded, for the benefit of the navy's guns and gunnery. The shooting will be done in as close to water as possible, and when she sinks the holes will be patched and she will be put through the same operation over and over again until she falls to pieces.

The old Montauk is one of the first of this class of vessels. She has undergone many engagements. Torpedoes have been fired at her and heavy ordinance has directed its missiles at her single turret, but she still floats. If the plan proves feasible, the other seven monitors now lying out of commission in the League Island navy yard will in all probability be used for the same purpose.

Pictures of Early Japan.

Entertaining pictures of Japan and the Japanese, as they were seen by English seamen, origins nearly 300 years ago, are to be found in the log-book of Captain Saris of the first voyage to Japan to open up trade there for the East India Company. Because of England's fame as victor over Spain, Saris was received very favorably by "the old King Foyu." The people, too, were, as a rule, both civil and courteous to him, although Saris tells of one "rascal" who came and at all times incessantly followed the English at a short distance through the streets, ing stones and shouting: "Kore, kore, Socoree wara," which Saris translated into "You Koreans with false hearts."

As to their naval enterprise, Saris says: "About eight or nine leagues on this side the straights of Xemineseque we found a large Towne where lay in a Docke a Juncke of 800 or 900 tunns, which the King caused all of yron with a guard appointed to keep her from firing and fraighting. She was built in a very homely fashion, much like that which described North's Ark's until this, The Naturals told us that she served to transport soulders in any of the Ilands, if rebellion or warre should happen."

Saris coasted round to Fushimi, where he saw the garrison 3,000 strong "shifted," a change that took two years or more. "We saw," he says, "the old bands march away, and the new enter in most soldierlike manner, numbering five almond, and to every ten files an officer which is called a captaine of fifth, who kept them continually in very good order."

Once there was a man who acquired a lot of money because he never had a cent to his name. Pretty honest. Just rich posing as a freak in a dime museum.

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False Standards of Success.

Lincoln Steffens, whose recent researches into "graft" in American municipalities have attracted general attention, has been led to draw some unpleasant philosophical deductions as to the cause for this prevailing corruption. In the article which he contributes to the April number of McClure's Magazine he declares his belief that the corruption in politics is but a reflection of prevailing corruption in the financial and business systems. There are debauched politicians because there are business men willing to debauch them. The enormous wealth of financiers and legislators is only an evidence of the bribe-giving practiced by individuals and corporations needing legislative favors.

It is only necessary to note the history of certain state and municipal legislatures assemble to see why Mr. Steffens came to make these sweeping generalizations. Chicago's big scandals in the "boodle" days and the more recent scandals in such cities St. Louis, Pittsburg, Philadelphia and Grand Rapids have relation to public contracts or to the sale of franchises and other important privileges to corporations. It is easy to see, also, why bribe-taking and the connection between corruption in politics and corruption in business, Mr. Steffens should be related rather than to the general demoralization of the whole economic system. It is not true that the majority of American engaged in business are disposed to wink at venality, but it is true that the worship of "success" has been carried to a point where contempt for public contempt or to the sale of franchises and other important privileges to corporations. It is easy to see, also, why bribe-taking and the connection between corruption in politics and corruption in business, Mr. Steffens should be related rather than to the general demoralization of the whole economic system. It is not true that the majority of American engaged in business are disposed to wink at venality, but it is true that the worship of "success" has been carried to a point where contempt for public contempt or to the sale of franchises and other important privileges to corporations.

When financiers of international fame as financiers do not hesitate to expose themselves to the risk of public ignominy as stock transactions as the ship-building trust deal, it cannot be expected that there will not be either men who will corrupt legislators or bribe legislatures to support their financial interests. When a people have been trained to gauge every man by his wealth it is inevitable that there should be a less sensitive conscience and a less keen perception of honor and honesty in the commonplace forms of bribery and corruption. What this country needs more than anything else just at present is to get away from the ideal of wealth as the highest goal of human ambition.

Russia is said to be entertaining the idea of changing the name of Port Arthur to something with a Russian sound about it. There may be a sort of feeling, also, that a new name for the place might change its luck.

Dowie is kept so busy dodging Australian mobs and placing his buds on straight again that he has time to send only an occasional telegram of encouragement to Zion City.

The Witch's Prophecy:

OR, GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY.

By ANNIE L. SMITH, author of "Oath-Bound," "Cubs," Dark Secrets," "Two Faces" Defiant," Etc

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CHAPTER XIII.
CAMPION TOWERS.

"The pear and quince lay squanders... in the grass,
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of blooming plums—a wilderness it was
Of fruits, and wind that swayed them."

After our necessary digression we take up the thread of our narrative at Glenwood, where our party of young people had planned an excursion to Campion Towers, the property of Philip Roscoe, which had remained untenanted for a long period, and had gained the unenviable reputation of being haunted.

Soon after leaving Glenwood they had returned from the city, having transacted his business, and willingly agreed to make one of the coterie, but owing to the extreme heat of the sun it was nearly four o'clock when the merry, merry party of five set forth on a visit to the deserted mansion.

Both Edna and Becky, fearless young women, and merrily the little cavalcade swept through the country road and gained the pike.

"Notwithstanding the Towers is Phil's estate I have never explored the old mansion," remarked Legrand, "the house has been untenanted for so many years that it is said to be haunted, and, as you know, the country around Glenwood is too pleasantly occupy their field cables, still, I suppose neither of them could be induced to enter the big house, or even the park, after nightfall, and in the broad light of day they shun a near approach, and call it haunted if a bird was committed there, some say two."

"I have heard that a terrible lady murdered, the owner of the estate, wasn't it?" asked Gerald, "and that her ghost walks at midnight, and her husband. That is the extent of my knowledge."

"I've also heard Aunt Becky declare that it is haunted by the specter of a beautiful lady who was murdered there some so many years ago," said Edna, eagerly.

"Well, Becky is an old fashioned dame, tales of ghosts, witches and fairies that one can never expect to get a plain story," laughed Goldyl. "If we visit the place we may be fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of this resident ghost. It is certainly not the fashion here, as in the old countries, to have a haunted castle, or a haunted tower or cellar to which some blood-curdling legend is attached—that is, a place of any pretentions."

"Quite so," said Roy. "They tell me that the mansion is really a fine old building. The interior I have never seen, but it is said to be elegantly furnished in the old fashionary phantom. Phil says he will not rent the place, as he prefers that it should remain unoccupied rather than be occupied by strangers. I have been over the estate with Phil, but he always refused to enter the mansion. Odd, isn't it?"

"How can we get in, without the keys?" asked Edna. "Curious that we did not think of that."

"We shall find some means of getting in, even at the risk of being indicted for burglary," retorted Gerald.

"The overseer must have the keys. We will ask him for them," said Goldyl.

"I think Phil keeps the keys. I know he comes over occasionally, but I do not think any one else enters the house," said Legrand. "But we will manage to effect an entrance if we can, by some means or other."

The road over which they were passing was rough and uneven. The sunlight sifted through the branches of the trees that interlaced across the narrow way—scarcely more than a bridle-path—for the party had left the carriage-way, some time before left. The track before them lost itself in a dense grove of forest-trees, topped by majestic forest trees, draped in many places with the graceful vine, through which the sun's fierce rays, for here a perpetual twilight reigned; and through this leafy covert the merry party wended their way, turning an abrupt angle around some frowning ledge, and as suddenly opening out to the left, on and on in the labyrinth of woodland, anon plunging into a hollow or else skirting the base of an opposite hill.

Darker and dimmer grew the green gloom, and when at last they would emerge from it after leaving the pike a bridle-path branched to the right, through a grass-grown dell.

"Yonder is the haunted hollow—Old Fan's lair," Legrand has had a seance with the witch, fortune-teller, seeress and what-not. Her hut is scarcely a stone's throw from the edge of Campion Towers park," said Roy.

"It was owing to this hut that we jotted on the night of our enforced visit to the witch's hut," returned Legrand, "it takes a sire-footed beast to make its way over this road without a stumble."

Upon turning sharply around an angle formed by a bristling vine-draped ledge the party came within view of an extensive park, almost a forest in extent and density, enclosed by a high iron railing that skirted the road. Upon a nearer view they saw that the grounds had a thoroughly neglected aspect, but that they had once been a spot of exceeding beauty was evident. Open glades, dotted with single forest trees, the elm and willow predominating, broke the monotony of woodland, and at intervals groups of the fragrant locust trees toased their feathery heads.

The ponderous gates barred the way, and the party halted.

Naught was heard save the melancholy croak and pop of tree frogs and the occasional call of a cardinal grosbeak, as the party dismounted and tethered their animals to the curved posts edging the enclosure.

The gates were unlocked, but creaked dismally upon rusted hinges, and the gentlemen led the animals through the principal entrance, while the ladies passed through the little gate across the narrow foot-path.

"Ye gods! side gate swings as easily as if recently oiled," Edna said, as she swung the gate backward and forward.

"I presume the overseer passes this way frequently," returned Roy.

Within the grounds the paved walks were moss-grown; grass and weeds flourished luxuriantly upon what had been a smooth, shaven lawn; a latticed arbor, once painted green, but faded by time and weather to a nameless hue, overgrown with a wealth of vine, and amid thickets of rose bushes and clustering honeysuckle, the rank grass and weeds knife had long been a stranger, marble statues, time-stained and mouldy, were looking down from their pedestals like ghostly sentinels of the lonely solitude.

A fountain now dry, in the form of a Neptune, stood in the center of what had been a circular basin, where aquatic plants and blossoming arms from the trident or the sea-god, and upon the borders of the basin violets and lilies of the valley grew in untrained profusion.

Birds flitted to their callow young amid the foliage of the giant trees, where they perched and sang, seeming to make demonstrance at the invasion of their haunts.

In the rear of the mansion groups of peach, pear, cherry and plum trees showed an abundant harvest, the grounds sloping away in the rear to the margin of a stream, andering away through the heart of a grove of noble forest trees, and separated by a rustic bridge, but the timbers were slowly decaying; like the rustic benches scattered through the dim paths, while from the branches of a giant oak the tattered remnants of a swing still clung—thick vines clamped by chains and rings; but the iron of the seat had given way, and hung in shreds fluttering from tufts where birds had snatched the materials for a downy nest.

All was decay save the sparkling brook-stream, and the bright waters that flashed through a vista to the westward.

Back in the midst of the hollow the plantation stretched away in smiling fields, gently swelling knobs and verdure-carpeted meadows, and up the gentle rise of the opposite slope clustered the whitewashed cabins of the negro laborers, and the white cot where these was the overseer's house, an unpretentious one-story building.

The mansion was built after the most subdued architecture, the windows and doors set deep in the thick limestone walls, the entrance in the center of the facade overhung by a projecting balcony supported by stone pillars, the flight of stone steps was broken in the center by a stone, three-arched and carved from yellow sandstone, and looking strikingly life-like from the coloring and posture.

The main structure was supplemented by a wing on either side, one of limestone, but the walls were darkened and stained by many years, and covered from base to parapet with a growth of woodbine and English ivy, intermingled with climbing roses, the crimson and white blooms of which twined its tendrils, not only upon the grim walls, but upon the branches of an ancient willow, flaunting its royal-red clusters like flowers from amid the dense green foliage.

This tower was pierced at irregular intervals by narrow windows, with tiny diamond panes, and was evidently the interior of a feudal castle, and to render the resemblance more perfect a narrow moat, now dry, flowed past, laving the tower walls at its base, and spanned by a rustic stream, in a nook between the tower and the main building, an ancient willow had taken its root, the branches forming across the narrow windows of the tower.

"Here are we to get in, now we are here?" asked Edna, after Gerald had tried each window upon the lower floor, and the doors, finding all securely locked.

"I noticed a ladder leaning against the old arbor as we were passing it, and I mean to reach the windows above, which may have been left unfastened," answered Roy. "Wait a moment."

He crossed the little drawbridge spanning the creek, that had been added both for effect and as a convenience in crossing from that portion of the building to the park.

"Isn't it like a story of the twelfth century?" exclaimed Goldyl, "the ancient donjon keep, the moat, the drawbridge?"

"Indeed, one might easily fancy some knight in armor, battle-ax in hand, might at any instant emerge from that massive door," returned Edna.

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At last there is a scientific way to cure yourself of any kidney, bladder or rheumatic disease in a very short time in your own home. Dr. Edwin Turner, a leading physician of Rochester, Ontario, Canada, has discovered a new system of treatment for all kidney and bladder diseases and it is said to cure almost all cases of certain ingredients which are used in this treatment, and will positively cure Bright's disease, diabetes, or any form of kidney trouble. Dr. Turner has also discovered a certain combination of ingredients for rheumatism, which he claims

"Yes," said Roy, who had returned and was placing the ladder against the wall at the angle of the building. "The tragedy is connected with this tower which has been shut up for years. I think that Phil never visits this portion of the mansion, nor permits any one to enter it. It was here that the murder was committed, in consequence of which my grandfather became heir of Campion Towers. The house servants were removed to Rockbrook, and after grandfather came into possession, and among them was Mammy Sue, who became my nurse after my mother came to Rockbrook."

"You know the story, then?"

"We have heard your story of the 'Specter Lady of the Tower' too often to forget."

The window proved to be unfastened, and Roy disappeared within, but presently reappeared from the rear of the mansion, where he had unbolted a door opening from a narrow side hall, where two doors opened from opposite sides of the corridor, the one upon the left to what had evidently been a sitting-room and the other, which last-named was fitted up in a luxurious fashion, although of a pattern differing from the ordinary, more from the dust of years that had collected than from the original coloring.

A carpet of fine workmanship, but dingy from dust, covered the floor, a massive sofa occupied a corner, half a dozen pictures—gems of art but veiled by cobwebs and grime—adorned the walls, unused for years and rendered damp and mouldy, the windows were curtained with Oriental hangings, and a table upon which several richly bound volumes were scattered or piled, stood in the center of the apartment. One, gilded and velvet covered, was open, just as it had been for many years, for the dust lay thickly upon its open pages.

"A Bible—I wonder who read that page last?" said Gerald, as at once the book caught his eye.

"Emulate the lady whose specter is said to haunt the tower," returned Legrand, briefly.

The party crossed the hall and entered the opposite room, which was fitted up as a library. The walls were lined with shelves, which were filled with volumes of all sizes and in almost every known language. A mahogany writing desk occupied the center of the room, directly beneath a gilded chandelier. Heavily cut glass globes, suspended from the centre, rested about, upon a table a gentleman's glove was lying, beside a portfolio containing a few sketches, the work of a masterly hand. Here, also, a thick coating of dust, the accumulation of years, lay upon the furniture, and upon carpet, woven to represent a bed of gorgeous green and crimson flowers.

Gerald threw back the heavy shutter. The dust upon the window sill left a straight line across a dark discoloration in plushes and drapery of purple-tinted Oriental rug beside the desk, the stain of blood.

CHAPTER XIV.

A ROMAN AMPHITHEATER.

From room to room they wandered, all fortunately in daylight, and each that quite astonished the intruders. Everywhere taste and wealth had dictated the adornment of the interior.

"What a pity that this charming residence should be left in solitude and decay!" said Edna. "It is a shame! I should dearly love to live in the ghost of grandaunt!"

"You forget the ghost," laughed Goldyl.

"It does not seem possible that such a lovely place could be haunted," sighed Edna.

"Why not, Sis?" asked Gerald. "I am sure her ghostship displays excellent taste."

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"You have not seen the most interesting part of the rookery, the tower, long since shut up, and said to be the especial haunt of the Specter Lady," said Roy. "It is exceedingly fortunate that I came through the open front window and unbarred the door at the entrance from the inside, otherwise you could not have had a peep."

"We shall be compelled to have a light, which I can procure in the dining-room. The candles are scarcely a quarter consumed, and I have my match-safe," remarked Gerald.

Crossing the hall he entered the dining-room, returning presently with half a dozen wax candles.

"The tower is at the extremity of this narrow corridor," Roy explained, opening a door from a small ante-room, fitted up as an office.

A ponderous door set deep in the masonry swung back creaking dismally, and at the extremity of a second corridor, the connecting link between the main edifice and the tower, a second door opened into a room of octagon form, the arched ceiling and walls frescoed in arabesque designs, the apex of the arch 15 ft. floor, and this delicate carving was stained in various colors, the pattern in the aspect of a tent canopied with silken curtains. The furnishing was Oriental, a divan of velvet and gold cushions were scattered and piled, and in the center of the floor a large Turkish carpet spread.

Directly in front of the entrance, at the extremity of the room, was an enormous tiger crouching for a leap, and in front of the monster, as if in combat with it, fierce was the figure of a gladiator, armed only with a knife, which he raised to resist the attack. Both figures were so life-like that it was difficult to realize that one was but the production of the sculptor's skill, the other but a clever imitation in wax.

The eyes of the tiger and beast were fixed upon his intended prey; the gladiator stood poised lightly, every muscle set in readiness to receive the fierce brute upon the point of the rapier.

The effect was so startling that the ladies started back involuntarily.

"By the by, Gerald," said Roy, "that monster has been dead for more years than I can count. The owner of the menagerie has been on the tapis for over thirty years, without doubt."

A low, muttering of thunder resounded through the building, precursor of a coming storm. The light of the gas chandelier quivered athwart the narrow, diamond-shaped windows.

Legrand peered through the narrow casements.

"Ugh! the clouds have settled; there's a thunderstorm coming on—a regular tempest, I should imagine, from the look of it. By moonlight, as we intended, we shall be obliged to remain here until after the shower."

"There will be no getting back to Glenwood to-night," observed Gerald. "We must see to getting the horses under cover at once, Roy, and then we can look about us while Legrand and I house the beasts."

The animals were soon stabled in the empty stables, and just as the young men returned to the tower the storm broke in violence, but the party determined to continue their exploration, and made their way up the narrow, winding stone staircase.

Ceiling and walls were fluted as in the lower tower chamber, the former of dark, which was here of rose pink, with a perfect imitation of lace traced upon its surface in a full-blown rose, in the centre of the octagon, the frame carved in exact imitation of a wild beast's head, the mouth and heads protruded from the upper portion of the mirror, while a pair of fierce, glaring jaws a bright-winged bird hovered, as if quite powerless to escape the fascination of the monsters.

The shutters of the casement through which Gerald had entered the castle-ramage were still open, and he hastily closed them, but as a flash of lightning lighted up the darkness with a sword of flame, followed by a crashing peal of thunder and a downpour of rain.

Upon a Turkish ottoman a gentleman's dressing-gown was thrown, as if it had been hastily aside by a careless hand.

Goldyl examined the garment curiously. "The material is rich, but I cannot have had an aesthetic taste," she said. "Ugh! that purple velvet and gold!"

"Just look! what elaborate embroidery!" communicated Edna. "Fitter for a queen than an Eastern Mogul. If I were in Phil Roscoe's place I would wear it, instead of having it carried so proudly."

"Imagine Phil wearing a garment that has lain in the tower for years!" laughed Edna. "He has a horror of the place from some cause; I believe he has a superstitious, or rather, but of course he doesn't choose to admit it. I presume it was Castello's ghost."

"Every one has a spice of superstition," laughed Goldyl. "Even Roy has more than the average."

"I have no idea I am anything of what phrenologists call marvelousness. No spook, great or small, would be apt to frighten me," returned Roy. "I should like to enjoy seeing a live ghost."

"Dreams are more than a live ghost," laughed Edna. "Rather a paradox."

"Let us examine the upper rooms," proposed Gerald.

"There is but one more room, I think," returned Roy.

The upper chamber was tinted in blue, the studded ceiling with golden stars, and in lieu of a carpet the flooring was of alternate white and blue tiles.

The furniture was scant; a table in the center, piled with volumes of ancient date, many of them in the Italian language, mostly astrological works, filled with the magic lore of the Orient. Ranged upon the walls were astrological implements, and a small stove, a lounging chair and a hammock completed the furniture of the room.

Upon the tiling at the foot of the winding stair landing to a skylight above, was a brown discoloration, mute evidence of the tragedy committed there so long ago, and on all sides the delicate coloring of the wall was plashed with the tell-tale stains,

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The Wise Hero.

"Sir," said the chairman of the committee to the eminent and sagacious hero, "we have been sent to pay our respects and to inquire of you what material you would like best for us to use in the statue of yourself which we propose erecting as a token of our esteem."

"Make the statue of snow," answered the hero.

"Of snow?" chorused the committee. "Why, sir, that would not last through the winter."

"I know that, but it will be a great deal more satisfying to me to see it melt away than to see it stand in an unfinished condition for about fifty years."

The Wrong Man.

The host had excused himself to go to the telephone, leaving his guest at the table. The obsequious waiter approached, with the check for the supper, saying:

"Sir, here is the reckoning." Languidly, the guest gave the waiter a hard look, saying:

"Yassong, you are reckoning without my host."

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as mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescriptions from reputable physicians, as the damage they will do is ten fold to the good you can possibly derive from them. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally and made in Toledo, Ohio, by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free.

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Why Eggs Are High.

A damsel who dwelt in Vincennes
Bought chickens and put them in pennes;
She waited a year
But no eggs came to cheer;
It seems that she thought they were hennes!

CAME FROM COFFEE

A Case Where the Taking of Morphine Began With Coffee.

"For 15 years," says a young Ohio woman, "I was a great sufferer from stomach, heart and liver trouble. For the last 10 years the suffering was terrible; it would be impossible to describe it. During the last three years I had convulsions from which the only relief was the use of morphine.

"I had several physicians, nearly all of whom advised me to stop drinking tea and coffee, but as I could take only liquid foods I felt I could not live without coffee. I continued drinking it until I became almost insane, my mind was affected, while my whole nervous system was a complete wreck. I suffered day and night from thirst and as water would only make me sick I kept on trying different drinks until a friend asked me to try Postum Food Coffee.

"I did so, but it was some time before I was benefited by the change, my system was so filled with coffee poison. It was not long, however, before I could eat all kinds of foods and drink all the cold water I wanted and which my system demands. It is now 4 years I have drank nothing but Postum for breakfast and supper and the result has been that in place of being an invalid with my mind affected I am now strong, sturdy, happy and healthy.

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Possibly So.

A lady who ate too much salad
Was seen to grow suddenly pallid.
She murmured "O dear!
It started so queer—
The oil that they used was invalid."

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Allen A. Watsons, Box 67, Norwich, Co. n. says if any sufferer from Heart Disease will write to me still, without cost charge, direct them to the perfect home cure she used.

The Power of the Eye.

Blazley—I was riding in a car this morning, and the conductor came along and looked at me as if I hadn't paid my fare.

Hisley—What did you do?

Blazley—I looked at him as if I had.

A Campaign Transaction.

"Politics gittin' right lively, ain't it?" "Oh, yes—they're pickin' me up here a dollar for you."

"Thanky, suh!" said the old campaigner, bowing low. "Thanky, suh! En would you please, suh, tell me what office you is a-runnin' for?"

"I—er—let me see; I think I'm running for the State Legislature."

The old man adjusted his spectacles, took a good long look at his man, and said:

"You better gimme another quarter, suh. Hit grieve me ter take hard work, soon en late, ter 'lect a man lak you; en I shouldn't wonder ef hit ain't gwine ter be wuth a whole dollar en a half."

Blizzard Station.

"Yes, the panama is the coolest hat in the summer.

"Do you know the coolest in winter?"

"What is it?"

"Medicine Hat."

Lady (who is posing and rather tired)—Oh, dear, haven't you yet got it all right for taking me?

Amateur Photographer—My dear lady, it'll be fine! You're just in the very attitude! Come round now and see for yourself!

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Womanlike.

"He is so effeminate," they say, speaking of the official who has been accused of wrongdoing.

We laugh sarcastically, knowing him to be six feet high and the owner of at least ten saloons.

"But he is effeminate," they argue. "Did you not see that interview with him, in which he asserts that he will clear his skirts of the charges?"

First Lesson in Economy.

Harry—Well, now that we are engaged, my girl is beginning to economize. You see, I used to take a pound box of ninety-cent bonbons to her every Sunday evening.

Fred—Ah, ha! and now she insists on a cheaper sort, I suppose?

Harry—Oh, no. You can get two pounds of the ninety-cent kind for $1.75, so she insists on a two-pound box.

The Soup Industry.

Steward (writing bill of fare)—What sort of soup will you have today?

Cook—I vill tell you soon. Zam!

Steward—Here!

Cook—Haf all yesterday's scraps peen added to zee stock-pot?

Sam—Yep.

Cook—Vat sort of soup does it smell like?

Flattery.

Miss Pechis—I have already said "no" to Mr. Vere. I don't seem to be able to make myself plain, although I have tried—

Fred—Ah! you couldn't do that no matter how you try, Miss Pechis.

Miss Pechis—Well—er—of course, I shall always be glad to have you call upon me, Mr. Vere.

So Often.

The Saint—Remember, old man, that you never hear of any one on this earth's dying but once.

The Sinner—How about the "original Uncle Tom"?

Proof.

"Do you believe that advertising pays?" asked the friend.

"Do I?" chuckled the country congressman. "Well, a patent-medicine concern gave me $200 for my testimonial.

Older the Better.

"Well, John," said Mrs. Stubb, "I reckon we better buy some new furniture and then rent a house in a modest locality."

"No, Maria," replied her husband, "we'll keep the furniture and rent a house in a swell neighborhood."

"But the furniture is all scratched and broken."

"That matters not. If we are in a swell neighborhood we can say it is 'colonial.'"

Another Outrage.

Swipsey—Here dis paper gives six columns to de Russian-Jap war an' only one inch to de fight last night between Bulldog Smith an' Kid Bone.

Jimmy—Ye don't say. I tell yer de press has reached a bum stage when it lets a little thing like dat interfere wid a real scrap.

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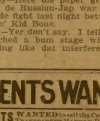

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Suspicious.

"Why are you leaving?" asked the star boarder.

"I'm afraid the landlady has designs on me—thinks she's going to get me to marry her daughter or something. At dinner last night she gave me the tenderloin instead of the tough end of the steak."

More Chances.

Sam—I hear dat you is gwine to fight a duel at twenty paces wid Mose Smiff instead ob a fist fight. Ain't a duel more dangerous?

Remus—No, sah. Ef Ah eb'n git twenty paces fum dat bully I'll take chances running forty mo'.

IN LEAP YEAR.

Hopeless Widower—Nothing can mend a broken heart.
Hopeful Widow—Except re-pairing.

An Interesting Girl.

Goldenrod—I'm quite anxious that you meet her.

Silverton—What sort of a girl is she—one with a past?

Goldenrod—No; but I don't think she'd object to having one.

Then or Never.

Miss Willing—Should a girl allow her fiance to kiss her before they are married?

Mrs. Wedderly—Well, if she wants him to kiss her at all she should.

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The Proper Training.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea for Josh to put more time on his books an' less on football?" said Mrs. Corntassel.

"No," answered the farmer. "Josh is goin' to live in New York an' I've noticed that the feller who manages to get through the crowd there is the one who knows how to use his knees an' elbows an' not the one who is readin' a paper."

Her Error.

"Is this Mr. Cazoo?" asked the fair young thing with a timid smile.

"It is," politely said the young man with the long hair, making a courteous bow.

"O, Mr. Cazoo!" she exclaimed, "I have so often wished to meet you. I know you will think it dreadfully improper of me to speak to you thus, but—"

"Not at all—not at all," he smiled, shaking his hair soothingly. "Lots of girls do, I assure you."

"Then I feel encouraged to speak to you about your wonderful work."

"Thank you. You are most kind."

"O, I think your efforts are sublime!"

"You flatter me," with a heavy blush.

"Indeed I do not. Your splendid lines in 'The Conflict' are simply grand. All our class—"

"My dear young lady, you overwhelm me. I must say I rev—"

"And O! that beautiful soliloquy—"

"Yes! That was in the last game, where I stood on the side lines and talked to myself. I—"

"Side lines? Why, what kind of lines are they?"

"On the edge of the field, you know."

"Mercy! Aren't you Mr. Cazoo, the poet?"

"Great Scott, no! You mean that fool brother of mine, Algy. I'm Bill Cazoo, the center rush of the football team—"

But she was gone.—Judge.

For Feathering the Home Nest.

"Papa," asked his youngest, "what do you call these little places in your desk?"

"Pigeonholes."

"Because, pusa," replied the literary person, with a dreamy, faraway look, "that's what they are; for homing pigeons, you know—little flyers in literature, as it were, that have come back to me."

But how was she to be expected to understand that?

In a Boston Nursery.

Johnnie—Ma, what does m-a-t-e-r-n-a-l-i-t-y mean?

Ma—It means, dearie, the contripetal force which is directed by those who fix for their mouths in vain aspiration for the ephemeral essence of cosmic generalities which have not been brought into pellucid ratiocination by the process involved in the metaphysical grouping of the cosmic as contradistinguished from the lambent ebullitions of the peripatetics.

Johnnie—Ah!

So Like a Woman.

"My dear, when you are at Mrs. Cunningham's this afternoon I hope you won't think of repeating that bit of gossip about Mrs. Giffoyle that Mrs. Fredick told us this afternoon."

"Why, mother?"

"Well, because it would be ungenerous and unkind, and I don't think Mrs. Giffoyle would like it told; and besides, I want to tell it to Mrs. Cunningham myself."

The Artistic Instinct.

"So Sendemhak, the editor, rejected your drawings?"

"Yes. He doesn't know art when he sees it."

"Did you say anything to him about it?"

"No. Just turned the pictures upside down and signed 'em at the top, and sent 'em to him again and he took the lot."

Proof.

"This land where we are standing," said the food parent, airing his knowledge, "was once the bed of the lake. It was covered with water and fishes swam right here."

"Yes, papa," said the small boy, looking eagerly for confirmation of his wife parent's theory, "there's a sardine can."

The Kid—O, come up here where I am, auntie. There's a fine view from here!

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Japan's Fighting Admiral.

The Japanese have reason to be proud of Vice-Admiral Togo, who has just succeeded Admiral Teubel in command of the combined squadron, the force which would probably be engaged first in case of war. He is a young officer, as fine officers go, in the prime of life, and he of all available admirals knows what naval war would mean under modern conditions means.

In 1894, when the Japanese "wiped out" the Chinese fleet, Admiral Togo—he was only a captain then—struck the first blow. He was in command of the second-class cruiser Naniwa, not an armored vessel, in the usual sense of the term, but a good British-built ship of 3,650 tons, with a protective deck from two inches to three inches thick and armored conning towers. For her size she was very heavily armed, carrying two 10-inch guns, six 6-inch and a couple of 9-pounders and 10 maxims for repelling torpedo craft. The little ship saw more fighting than any other vessel in the Japanese navy, and Captain Togo won great credit for his title "the fighting admiral," self and his title "the fighting admiral." He is one of the popular heroes of Japan.

The British steamer Kowshing and two others had been loaded up with soldiers and stores by the Chinese and had started for Korea. On July 25, when in sight of the islands of the Korean archipelago the Japanese opened war—the Naniwa—came in sight of the Kowshing and fired blank shots as a signal for her to stop. The order was obeyed and then Captain Togo signaled: "Remain where you are or take the consequences."

The Kowshing was subsequently directed to follow the man-of-war, but the British vessel would not let the British skipper carry out the order and threatened to murder him. Captain Togo then said he would be styled "an arbitrary gent," and when he answered he fired European and Japanese leave the ship and then promptly discharged a torpedo and it opened fire with its big guns which could be brought to bear.

The torpedo hit the vessel, and in the words of Herr von Brandt, the Prussian officer in the Chinese service, who was on board, "the day began to fight; shells, coal, splinters, and water filled the air; then I believe all of us began swimming and swam." Many of the crew reached land, though it is said the Captain of the man-of-war would give no aid to anybody but the Chinese; his idea of war did not go on these humanitarian lines. The Kowshing sank in half an hour.—London Telegraph.

"Ivory" Made From Milk.

The man smoking a cigarette in a holder took it out of his mouth and showed it to the man next to him.

"See that mouthpiece?" he said. "Doesn't look like it was made out of milk, does it? The other man took it, looked at it a minute and said the first man was another who dared to take a leg. He also said it was either amber or a good celluloid imitation.

"All right," went on the first man, "you believe anything you please, but that stuff is made out of milk. Of course, not made like butter is, or lemon custard, or any old things like that, but made from just the same. It is made in Germany and they call it galalith, or formolite. It is made by certain chemical processes out of skimmed milk, the curd, or hard part of the milk being the base for the strength of the material.

"It is made in imitation of all sorts of materials and is used for the same, knife handles, cigar holders and pretty much everything that celluloid is used for, with the advantage over that compound that it is inflammable and has no smell. They can make it an ebony of it as black and hard as the genuine, and will take the same kind of a polish. It is catching on in Germany and it won't be long before we have it over here, and if we never get our heads in the door knobs, we'll at least have our cows giving milk handles and combs and such stuff, which is not so bad for cows, and may stimulate the hens to be more progressive."

Map Making.

Map making has kept pace with the progress of other arts, though its steps are not so obvious and heard oftener of in the schoolroom. It is really an art to make a map and has always been so. From the time of the earliest crude affairs to the elaborate and exact pictures of today a great piece of skill has always been necessary to give a perfected representation.

Map making is now at the height of its excellence and popularity. The man with land to cultivate, houses to build or rent or to sell must have everything set down on his map for reference. Nobody thinks of traveling any distance without procuring a map. Indeed, it is almost impossible to escape it. The tempting display of maps thrusts it into one's hand with thoughtful kindness, mindful of the many persons within whose ken as well as of the convenience of the tourist.

Maps are so common now that there are no more little boys who think the soil of one State is green, another brown and another red, because that is the way it is colored in the geography.

Breeding Tortoises.

An enterprising Mexican has rented a lake in Tuxtla Island, off Campeche, the west coast of Yucatan, from the Mexican Government for the purpose of breeding the shell-bearing tortoise, and expects to make a fortune, reports an exchange. He pays $100 a year for ten years. The tortoise lives to a great age, and its growth is nearly as slow as its movements. A shell consists of thirteen plates, which are surrounded by twenty-five smaller plates as a protective margin. As a new layer of horny substance is produced each year, a plate at its exposed edge marks the age of the animal. Tortoise-shell in the arts and for use as a combs is coming into favor again, notwithstanding its easy imitation in celluloid.

A woman is nervous until she gets to the matrimonial altar—then it's the man's turn.

The Witch's Prophecy.

(Continued from page seven.)

was her birthright; he found his mistake when Signor Castello, with the haughty air of a prince, asked of him the hand of his daughter, and his surprise was very great that for a moment he was incapable of speech, while the Signor sat with a smile on his lips, as he gazed upon his employer's face as if the demand were the most usual affair.

"He was fairly aghast. Money his favorite might call and he would have been happy—he supplied, but this was something he had never dreamed of, and he sat staring at the darling lover who was looking into his face with slow, lazy smile so full of confidence.

"At last the old man found voice, and poured forth his rage without stint.

"Signor Castello listened quietly, and when the old man paused from utter exhaustion he calmly held his hand expectantly.

"My kind friend, forgive my presumption and regret what I have said," he began in a tremulous tone. "I have never spoken of love to your daughter, and I here pledge me faithfully I never will presume. Let her remain only my pupil, he pleaded humbly.

"The old man looked at him with a change of manner, and when the young Italian pleading clasp of hands with the Signor he smiled in token of forgiveness.

"Sue had been sent by her mistress to the parlor with music, but the sound of music, and, hearing voices in dispute, she lingered in the passage, and during the affray the natural curiosity of her race prompted her to remain until the end, when she saw the Signor accepted the glass of wine the Signor offered. Then she made a hasty retreat.

"When Cicero, Mr. Archbald's body servant, entered the dining chamber on the following morning, he found the old man dead.

"Disease of the heart, the physicians said," but Sue was certain that he had died by poison administered in the glass of wine.

"She had seen him draw a tiny vial from his pocket, and while his hand was over her master drank the wine, and as stealthily retirned to his pocket. Sue was certain that the attention of the old man.

"While she pondered whether she should make an accusation against the villain to the mistress, her indecision was set at rest; an hour after it was known that her master was dead, Signor Castello boldly claimed Emalade as his wife. The couple had been married a week previous.

"After the burial but a month elapsed when the will was read in which he imported his wife to sign—a will—in which he established Sue's freedom in the event of her death.

"Even the property of her husband could not blind her to the fact that he possessed an avaricious nature, and all his protestations of love were false, but a surging devotion filled; she refused to comply with his request, and finally he took off all semblance of love, revealing his real nature, as he thought, to Sue, and began treating his wife with the utmost coldness, even threatening to desert her unless she sifted the secret of the will out of Sue's mistress.

"Heart-broken, yet proud to a degree, Emalade determined to keep her husband's profit by his marriage, which he acknowledged was a mercenary one for the wealth and position of his bride; she set about making a will that should effectually bar the avaricious husband, and signing over her life, which she feared, her dread increasing day by day.

"Her faithful old nurse was her only confidant, and Sue, in turn, never doubted her word.

"Oh, Mammy, Mammy!" sobbed the poor girl, "my worst suspicions are confirmed. I fear he will take my life. I have made my will, and have left it in the care of you; it was duly witnessed and signed; he will never profit one penny by my death. Without a doubt he has murdered my poor father, and he will murder me. Tomorrow I shall return to Toronto and place myself under the protection of my attorney, who will take the necessary steps to save me from this wretch. I have hidden the will in there.

"The sentence was never finished; the abrupt entrance of Castello cut short the words.

"If he had gathered anything of the conversation he gave no evidence, greeting his wife with cold courtesy, and dismissing Sue at once.

"The conversation had taken place in the pink chamber of the tower, which was occupied by the mistress without; and Sue went away to her own little room in the main building, sighing deeply.

"At the midnight hour Sue was roused from a troubled sleep by the sound of low bell communicating with her mistress' room—a faint vibration—and Sue was unerring in her response. She heard the summons until she saw the slight quiver of the bell.

"A frightful presentiment of evil overcame her, and trembling with fear she hastened to the tower, from which the ring proceeded.

"The inner door of the ante-room was slightly ajar.

"Tell me where you have hidden the accursed will or you will never leave this place alive!"

"She knew the Italian's voice.

"You may murder me as you did my father, but you will gain nothing! I will never speak! Murderer! I leave you forever!" cried Emalade, defiantly.

"She paused in terror at the nearly closed entrance.

"The Italian held her mistress by the arm, but the lady wrenched herself from his hold and fled toward the outer door, but the villain intercepted her retreat, and she bounded up the winding stair, but not before the stiletto had pierced her shoulder, and but a few inches from his outstretched hand as he pursued.

"Half paralyzed with terror, Sue crept across the crimson chamber and crouched in the shadow of the great pillar at the foot of the staircase. Listening to the suppressed shrieks of her mistress and the smothered oaths of the assassin. Presently all was over, the patter of flying feet, the tramp of the murderer ceased. A gurgling cry, followed by a deep groan, and all was still.

"Sue knew what she would have been powerless, She realized that, and with the speed of a deer the nurse bounded away, out through the narrow side entrance, across the lawn and the little bridge, and over the fields, arriving at the overseer's dwelling breathless and weak from exertion.

"Her story was told, but it was nearly half an hour when Mathews arrived at the tower with half a dozen brawny field hands.

"In the blue chamber the young wife lay, pierced to the heart by a slender stiletto which was lying by her side, a weapon the Signor usually carried, according to the habit of his countrymen.

"Hideous wounds had been inflicted, besides the thrust that had ended life; one, as Sue had seen, in the shoulder, the result of her precipitate flight. The delicate tiles were stained and the walls besattered, the imprint of a hand and the all-but-dry drops upon the wall speaking trumpet-tongued of the fearful struggle for life ere the tragedy was consummated.

"Not one of the house servants, who slept in the wing on the quarters in the rear of the main building, had been aroused until summoned by the overseer, who stood in the anteroom they peered into the chamber, terror-fixed by the scene.

"The assassin had fled, but an open compartment of the desk in the closed chamber of the dead master's private room told a tale of robbery. Bills to the amount of several dollars had been abstracted, and probably a larger sum. Whether Castello had secured what he secret compartment by Emalade herself, in the presence of Sue, only that morning when the murder.

"A valuable diamond set and other jewels of great value had been abstracted.

"The wretch has left about ten thousand dollars in money, the gems have been his booty," exclaimed Mr. Mathews, angrily. "I have always warned Mr. Archbald of the danger of a negro amount of ready cash about the house—it is dangerous at all times.

"The evening had set in, dark and dismal, and the overseer started in search of the murderer, reached the dwelling the rain began to fall, with its great drops, and a storm, a steady downpour, that obliterated all traces outside the dwelling, but the impress of blood on the floor upon that the murderer had entrance told that the murderer had made his escape.

"The storm passed with the night, and the sun rose clear and bright, the rain-drops falling through the narrow windows of the blue chamber and resting upon that which was once a fair and gentle face, the face of a dead woman slain by her husband.

"The coroner had arrived, accompanied by a jury, the second morning after the twain within a period of three short months, and while detectives were searching for a clue to the murderer, the inquest proceeded, the verdict was rendered.

"Murder committed by the hands of Antonio Castello."

Further chapters of this extraordinary story will appear in next week's issue of the Ledger. With each subscription we are still giving away a beautiful picture and are announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Items of Interest.

An English electrician has estimated that just two-fifths of the steam power required for a signal to pass through the Mont Cenis cable, 2,700 miles.

Many German innkeeper, on the Swiss border, has undertaken, as the result of a wager, to drink a barrel of wine across Switzerland and Italy at Genoa.

In Chilian towns most of the stores are open until midnight, but they are locked up during the warm afternoons, when everybody ceases from work and takes a siesta.

A medical minority declares that hearty sneezing is an evidence of a robust constitution. Persons with sickly habits don't sneeze, and when they do there is little force to it.

The honey bee, with all its industry, energy and the innumerable journeys it has to perform, will not produce much more than a teaspoonful of honey in a season of three months.

A new fuel has come into use in California. It is made from the twigs and leaves of the eucalyptus trees mixed with crude petroleum. It is said to burn freely and give good results.

Pigeons are trained to be loiters. When peals are rung they will stand with its claws and swim on deeper water. Now claws will swim at once to grow, and the birds are as large as the old ones.

A resident of Newark, N. J., William Archbald, has been awarded the silver medal and diploma of the St. Petersburg Photographic Society for a picture that won the prize were photographs of lightning flashes.

The death plant of Java has flowers which continually give off a perfume so powerful that persons attempted for any length of time, a full-grown man, and which kills all forms of insect life that come under its influence.

The Usual Program.

Lady—My foot seems to be swelled.

Shoe Dealer—These No. 3 shoes have been worn by a lady who has small feet.

Lady—I really believe my joints are enlarged.

Dealer—Most likely these shoes are wrongly marked. They may be No. 11s.

Lady—I certainly can't get them on.

Dealer—Your instep is high. I will get another pair with a higher instep. All persons of noble ancestry have high insteps.

Dealer (back part of the store, two minutes later)—Quick, George, rub the marks off those number sizes and give them to that woman in front.

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Diseases of the Throat, Lungs and other Vital Organs are especially prominent at this season of the year, and if you have these or any other diseases, just write me all about your sickness today and you will receive the Treatment at once on trial. I have recently cured by many people with my new treatment that I want a chance to prove my ability in your case. My address is Dr. J. A. Lomas, 30½ Fredericksen Bldg., South Bend, Ind. Let me hear from you and I will care you.
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MY FIRST HIGH HAT.

BY HERMAN HAMJE.

My first high hat—whew! I remember it. That hat caused me more trouble and vexation than any other hat I ever possessed.

I was still a minor, and under the watchful eye of my awful dad when this high hat fever took possession of me. I did not dare to broach to him my soul's delight, because that would have been a good opportunity for him to give me a lecture upon the follies of our modern youth; and this not being a very interesting subject, I kept my hobby to myself and continued to gaze with longing eyes into the hatters' windows, wondering when I should have the pleasure of balancing myself under a high hat.

At last the longing became unbearable. I could think of nothing but high hat. So I determined to have one at all hazards; and, as New Year's day was but a week off, I decided to make my debut on that day in the much-coveted hat.

With an air of manliness and self-importance, I approached my father and purchased my first high hat. I shall not attempt to describe my feelings on that momentous occasion, for I know I shown unusual delight upon beholding my shining tile; but suffice it to say that I thought all efforts on the part of the shopman to send my hat home, and hastily stalked out of the store, hat in hand, and, with catlike tread, smuggled myself and hat to my room.

So far, so good.

Now that myself and hat were for a time safe, I began to think how I was to wear it on the morrow without my father becoming aware of the fact. The more I thought it over, the more puzzling it became, and the his features seemed to be a white elephant on my hands. However, I managed to put in a very good night, considering what was on my bed, and in the morning I determined to put on a bold face and have a private conversation with my father.

After breakfast I found my parent in the parlor, walked up, approached him with feelings of guilt, and, after clearing my throat and bracing myself against the mantel, I began to blow:

"Father—ahem! Ma—ma—my l——"

To get any further seemed almost impossible. A cold perspiration ran down my back, and I felt decidedly uncomfortable. At length I managed to muster up courage enough to continue:

"Pa—father, may I—I wear a—a—a——"

Here my utterance became choked. A frog or something seemed to be in my throat, and I felt as if I was going to have an attack of chills and fever. My father by this time had removed his glasses and paper and, seeing my perplexity, said:

"Well, my son?"

"A high hat," I ejaculated, feeling very thankful for his assistance.

"Well! I—ahem!" replied my father in an awful manner, much to my surprise, "you are a lazy boy for your age—twenty-and I don't suppose it will do you any harm. I had a new hat made for today, but I don't think I will make any calls, and you can put in a loafing day, and wear it."

During my father's reply, his easy manner and apparent willingness caused my feelings to become quite buoyant; but his offer to loan his hat fell like cold water upon them. However, it was new. It is true, but the style was anything but the latest. So I ventured to remark that he would give his consent I would go out and purchase one. This he finally did, after giving me some advice, and I rushed to my room, brought out the hat from its hiding place, left the house, and remained in about an hour, apparently having just purchased it, and placed it before my parent for his inspection.

He pronounced it quite becoming, and, to my surprise, "just the thing." My sisters at first ridiculed my hat, but finally agreed with my father. A feeling every inch a man, and about one foot taller, left the room, saying to myself:

"Good enough."

An hour later and I was fully dressed to make New Year calls. I left the house perfectly at peace with myself and all the world, and, to my horror, one of the fact that the dear girls in the neighborhood were looking at me, endeavored to enter my carriage with as much grace as possible. I would have succeeded had it not been for the confounded carriage which my hat came in contact with, and I found myself for a moment in total darkness, my hat being jammed clean down over my eyes. I removed it in a flutter of those horrid girls, and affectionately smoothed the ruffled silk, which took some fifteen minutes to do, and then drove pulled up at my first calling place.

As I alighted I observed a couple of boys on the sidewalk making snowballs, which sight did not give me very pleasant feelings, for I felt certain that those very snowballs were intended for my hat. But there was no choice in the matter, so I skipped out of the coach, and as I mounted the stoop I heard one of the boys say to his companion:

"Hi, my, Snorky, look at the snoozer in the steel-pen coat and plug hat. Let's soak him!"

With this they let fly a couple of snowballs, which, happily, missed their mark, and the door being opened before they had time to reload, I entered, feeling for a time safe. But this feeling was but momentary. I took a hurried glance in the curtain and saw those young urchins piling up snowballs and casting sly glances up at the windows with a twinkle in their eyes that meant mischief.

I prolonged my call as long as etiquette would permit, hoping that they would, in the meantime, find some other hat to attract their attention. But no other hat came along. While I was standing in the hall, contemplating what course to pursue, a happy thought came to my mind, and that was to bribe the boys.

Acting upon the suggestion, I took two bright ten-cent pieces from my pocket, donned my hat and left the house. Not a boy was to be seen—not even the ghost of one.

After looking up and down the street, and seeing the coast clear, I made for the carriage; as I did so I heard those boys say: "shoot the hat!" and my hat went flying into the carriage, and I tumbled in after it, accompanied by half a dozen snowballs.

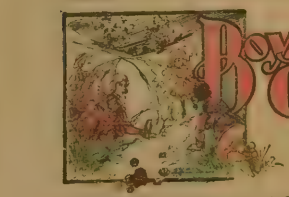
Surprised, dumfounded and mad, I began to repair damages as well as I could, which consisted of a huge wet spot on the back of my hat, and a few bits of ice rubbed the wrong way.

While I was bewailing my lot, and inwardly wishing those boys in any place but Heaven, the carriage stopped and I stepped out into the street. Here my misfortunes followed me. Notwithstanding the muddy condition of the street, I found an abundance of ice, and it was with a slight pang that I observed the hatrack full, and was compelled to place my hat on the floor. Having deposited it with great care in one corner, out of harm's way, as I thought, I entered the parlor and was received with the usual "Happy New Years." "How many calls have you made?" "Is Miss Miss Sorry-dressed?" followed by the usual invitation and partaking of refreshments. To all of which I made the same reply—"Don't know," and "Yes" to the invitation, and having gone through the usual round of calls, the ladies ordered me and made my exit.

Oh, heavens! the sight I beheld! Three hooking umbrellas in my high hat! I reached them in an instant and hung them at the hatrack, and, as they came out from the crowd fumed, swore and hopped, the owners of the three umbrellas appeared. On becoming acquainted with the sad facts they, of course, apologized for their conduct, which I had to accept, as they were somewhat larger, and left the house. I followed them out, and, after clearing the umbrellas and umbrella at the bottom of the sea.

I finally succeeded in making about half a dozen calls quite successfully, [illegible] them did, [illegible]sure, alleviated the pains which my affection for my hat caused me. I was getting quite tired of the ordeal, and resolved to call it quits. Then, for the last call, and, to a certain extent, had forgotten all about my hat when the hour for my departure arrived.

There the hat hung, high and dry, on the uppermost peg of the hatrack, looking serene and happy. To all outward appearances the hat had been taking first honors with it. I reached for it and attempted to put it on my head, but, to my horror, I found the hat rested on my shoulders and I distinctly heard a laugh from the fair group around me. I was crushed. If an earthquake could have punched the head of the owner of that hat through the crown to show my anger in the presence of the ladies



BERT HOLTON'S RUSE;

Or, The Ready Rifles of Windago.

By J. M. MERRILL, author of "The Young Invincibles," "The Shanty Chore-Boy," Etc.

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CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN STANRIDGE'S COURAGE PUT TO THE TEST.

"Mr. Dagget,"

Bert called to the man standing so silent and motionless in the starlight. The voice thus addressed turned from contemplating the reflected eyes of the night and walked slowly up the bank. He grasped Bert's hand warmly by the hand, at the same time emitting a low chuckle.

"You seem to be much pleased at something, Mr. Dagget," said Bert. "Won't you please tell us, so that we can enjoy the fun as well as yourself?"

"I might, and then ag'in I mightn't," chuckled the hunter who, although well known to Bert, was yet a deep puzzle to him.

"Of course you can do as you please about it," said Bert, "but if there is anything in this Indian trouble to laugh at I should like to know where it is. As far as I am concerned the affair has so far proven anything but a laughing matter."

"Wal, that's as how we look at it," returned the hunter, grasping Captain Stanridge by the shoulder and shaking him from very excess of merriment. "It's a cute game that Ole Antoine 'ter put up, and maybe he's blundered some'at, but ef I ain't mistook he's skeered old man Stanridge nigh about 'ter death. 'Twas a lucky thing some of you boys was in range of them shots a bit ago, fer some men are dum keerless. Ef them fellers don't look out they'll accidentarally kill somebody."

Bert made no remark, and Hunter Dagget proceeded.

"I hev been away on my huntin' trip, or I'd hev put a stop to the red nigger's game, ef I'd the evil was all did when I got back ter Windago, and so, as Ed wanted me to keep mum, I've jest did so, but I sw'ar I can't hold in much longer or I shell bust plum entirely."

"That would indeed be a bad accident," said Bert. "Was it for sport that Antoine set the Indians on the warpath?"

"Not much. That 'ere copperskin hain't got no humor in his natur, but he heered about the skeery feelin' among ther whites, and dum my skin ef he didn't foller up the suggestion and make the most of it."

Again a guttural laugh fell from the hunter's lips.

"It was you, then, that set the villain going?"

"I reckon 'twas, bub."

"Well, this funny spell of yours and Antoine's may cost one man his life, if not others," returned the boy captain, sternly.

"Who's hurt now—eh, Bert?"

"Asa Fontain."

"You don't mean it!" cried Dagget, quickly. "Age is the best friend I've got in Windago. Tell me about it, boy."

Thus urged, Bert told of his own adventure and of the part Old Antoine had played in the perhaps fatal hurt received by the mechanic. The hunter listened with interest, and when Bert had concluded a muttered imprecation fell from his lips.

[illegible] "the colored skunk [illegible] in dead earnest. [illegible] of a piece [illegible] "So [illegible] ter get [illegible] the big [illegible] of ther Sioux. [illegible] 'em up fer ter kill. [illegible] could, nohow."

"How about the Sioux?" asked Bert. "Do you think those bucks that gave me such a time were friendly reds? I can scarcely believe it myself."

"Wal, they wa'n't Sioux. I kin sw'ar to that," returned the hunter. "Of course they didn't treat you right, but sich critters ain't got no sense much when they git ter goin'. I'll shet pan on the bull bizness by goin' ter see the reds and callin' 'em off."

The affair has gone so far," said Bert, "that I think no harm will come of keeping up the farce for a short time longer. Would you be willing to help your friend, Mr. Fontain, Nick?"

"Try me and see, bub."

Tom Thurston and his companions now appeared and were taken into the confidence of their captain. Of the twenty youths who had gone into the company of Ready Rifles less than half proved worthy of their young captain's confidence. The few that stuck by the organization despite the threats and blandishments of the foxy lawyer-captain were true blue, and Captain Bert did not fear to trust them. Dell Adams had been a little weak at a critical moment, but he seemed all right now, and so Bert admitted him into the counsel of war which was held under the end of the bridge with thirty armed men not ten rods away—nothing which can nerve the outcome of the war which each man believed about to be launched upon him.

Captain Stanridge waited in the evening shadows for a long hour without seeing or hearing anything more of the Indians or his boy helpers. The doughty chieftain chafed at the delay. He thought what kept the boys silent so long. The only explanation was that Bert and Ed had been unable to find Nick Dagget, as they had so confidently promised.

Some of the men in the ranks began to mutter, and the boys to chatter. Captain Stanridge paced forth and back along the edge of the bridge, his scabbard clattering against the rail with considerable noise.

A messenger came to tell the Captain that nothing of an alarming nature had as yet been seen or heard in the lower bridge.

"Tell Rimple to keep a sharp lookout, and remain right where he is for the present," said the Captain. "I am about negotiating peace with the Indians. If our friends know hold on where they are, and make no further demonstration, it is possible for me to do so without further bloodshed."

Soon after the messenger departed steps were heard approaching from the enemy's side of the river. A voice was taking pains to tell it a friend was approaching in a cautious manner.

"Come on," called Captain Stanridge, "if you are a friend to the whites you have nothing to fear."

"I reckon you wouldn't call me anythin' else, John," said a hearty voice at the approaching man stride into their midst.

It was Nick Dagget, who was soon shaking hands with old friends.

"If you'll jist step aside a minnit, Captain Stanridge, I'll tell ye how I happen ter be here," said Dagget, after his greeting with neighborn was over.

Stanridge was pleased to do as the old trapper suggested, and soon the two were in earnest confab under the shadow of an overhead beam.

"You thought I was a long time comin', boss," said Dagget, "but it was cos I took time by the forelock, and went straight ter Pokonobone, the great chief of the Ryle Sioux—see?"

"I don't see," assented the Captain, "and I am consumed with curiosity to know how you managed to get Pokonobone to agree—that the whites of Windago were half a thousand strong, and ready to the death? I think the boys knew my wishes in that regard, Nick."

"I told 'em some s'prisin' big yarns, John, but the old chief is a mighty wary old cuss.

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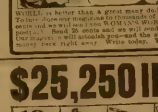

Each of these pictures represents the name of a well-known article. Some of these names are [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

and he wanted evidence—evidence that what I said was true—that I was what you call authorized to speak for the town."

"Well?"

"Of course I couldn't produce the evidence, so I have come to get it, you understand."

"That means some sort of writing, I suppose," said the Captain, quickly. "Well, that shall soon be forthcoming. I will go back to my office and execute some legal documents—"

"Nothing of that kind 'll do, John," interrupted the hunter. "As I told yer afore, ole Polce's a sharp cuss, and can't be fooled easy."

"I suppose not."

"That he can't."

"What, then, would you suggest, Nick?"

"The only thing that can save Windago and the whole of the Muskegon valley from ruth and ravage, old man."

"Go on."

"The great white chief must go to Pokonobono and tell him about things with his own lips."

"You told him I couldn't come, of course," said the Captain, quickly. "It would be bad generalship to expose the leading man to death in such a manner. Go tell this boastful savage that I will not come, that I——"

"I hev told him already that yer would come, though, John, and it's yer bounden duty ter make my word good. Ef yer don't there'll be an immegiate attack all along the river from two thousand warriors, beat from the bloody fields of Minnesotar. My word's pledged, too, and I'm in dooty bound ter fetch yer, boss."

"You had no authority for such a promise, Nick," declared the Captain, evincing some trepidation, much to the amusement of his visitor. "It would not be using my friends in the village right to expose my life in the manner you speak of."

"That's no whit ov danger, John, ef ye do as I tell yer. Ef yer don't, then the responsibility since will immegiately begin, and Windago's people will be swalleced up in blood and death!"

The speaker emphasized his words with an oath that sent the blood in congealed masses "gon the heart of his listener.

Dark forms descended the dugway.

CHAPTER XIV.

STANRIDGE GOES ON A MISSION.

As the great mogul of Windago continued to bombaste the old trapper said:

"Jest as ye like, John. I've did my dutty, and can do no more. I'll find some one who'll take ther chances and win starnel fame by savin' ther settlers from bein murdered."

Nick Dagget turned on his heel.

"Stop a minute, Nick," cried the lawyer. "I think I'll risk it. Will you accompany me to the Indian camp?"

"Jest as you say, boss," returned the hunter, turning back with a grim, satisfied smile, which of course the other did not see.

"Do you think the Sioux will keep faith with us?" asked the Captain in a quavering voice. "You see, I have read a good deal about Indian treachery, and I hate to take any chances. Of course, if by my going to meet the redmen I can avert an Indian massacre, I shall be only too glad to do so. A man will be taking his life in his hand, however."

"It may look that a-way," agreed Dagget, "but I know old Pokonobono, and he'll not harm anybody that's my friend."

"When shall I come?"

"Right along now."

"Hadn't I better go to my office first and get some documents in order to have everything legal?"

"Come right along now or it may be too late, John."

"You think it will be perfectly safe?"

"I'm sure of it. Pokonobono is my friend. I saved his life from a grizzly bear once, and he's been grateful ever sence; that's how I've kept the bloody Injuns from fallin' on Windago this time. The hull band is waitin' fur me ter return now and report."

"Very well, Nick, I will go."

"All right, boss."

The two men walked back to where the men stood at arms waiting the outcome of their leader's confab with the old trapper. The latter was well known to nearly every one present, and his presence had a most soothing influence on the tired nerves of the men.

Captain Stanridge explained the situation in a very few words. He assured them that it was necessary to use subterfuge in dealing with the redmen, who were even now hemming in the village at least two thousand strong. Nothing, he assured them, but an exaggerated show of numbers on their part could stay the hand of slaughter.

"I have decided to make a bold move," he concluded, "by taking my life in my hand in the interest of my townspeople. I shall visit the Indian camp and board the great Pokonobono, surrounded by his bloodthirsty warriors. If I can deceive him with a good yarn, well and good; if not, and I fall, you men of Windago will avenge me."

With this magnificent burst of confidence Captain Stanridge walked loftily in the footsteps of the old trapper.

"Now, what do you think of that?" said a voice.

"I think we have underrated the old man's grit," said another. "It's as much as the Captain's life is worth to make this venture."

"Yaas, pervidin'."

"Providing what, Bill Dakins?"

"Pervidin' they's many redskins over yender on them bluffs."

"Maybe you don't believe it?"

"That's what I jest don't believe ther yarn. Ole Nick's capable ov doin' the hull ov ther matter o' dus. But it's uncomfortable here, and we kin wait."

No one commented on the last utterance, and silence fell once more over the scene. The moon climbed high, and objects became more plainly visible along the river and adjacent shores.

An hour of patient waiting brought its reward. Far up the stream flashed a bright light. The blaze, tiny at first, rose higher and higher until it leaped up at least ten feet above the underwood, swaying and licking the upper branches like the red tongue of a monster serpent.

Stern and white were the faces of the assembled settlers on the bridge. Hands tightened on musket barrel and stock teeth closed more tightly, while eyes glowed with deep expectancy. Hearts beat faster with the thought of hostilities about to begin. No warning shots hurtled from the hillside, however. A distant yell was borne from far above on the wings of the night wind, followed by a sluggish and death-like silence.

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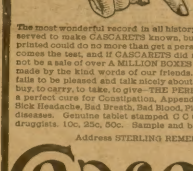

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ember-like glow along the steep side of the bluff. No denunciation followed.

The armed guardians of the town were filled with awe and alarm for a time. Another hour passed and still their commander did not return. There was a stir at length among the men of Wyandotte.

"Something is wrong over yonder," declared a low yet emphatic voice. "I don't fancy standing here like bumps on a tree waiting while the red devils get the drop on us. I'll bet a farm that they've killed our Captain."

"If does seem 'a it he ought ter have showed up afore now," said another of the House Defenders.

"And the boys," put in Mr. Thurston at this moment. "I think it's time something was done to find out what has become of them. My Tom wouldn't hold off in this way without some good reason for it. I am going to investigate."

Thus speaking, the man began walking toward the danger end of the bridge.

"Call him back, some one."

But no one interfered, and Thurston continued on his way until he reached the end of the bridge. Pausing there, he listened his ear to listen. The murmur of human voices was borne distinctly to his ear from a point beneath his position.

Deeply interested, the man moved over to the south side of the bridge. Here the sound of voices grew louder, and he fancied he heard a low laugh.

"It seems to me the lads are a long time away, Tom. D'ye reckon the old darky gimelt a mice and gigged back on them?"

"Of course not. If he had, the case we'd have heard from them before now."

The listener above recognized the voice of the last speaker as that of his son Thomas, and the sound brought a relieved feeling to the heart of the Father. His first thought was to make himself known, his next to hold his peace and play the eavesdropper, which he did to good purpose.

"If the fellows succeed it'll be great, will it, Jack?"

"I should say it would; but old Stanridge isn't a fool—you know that as well as I do. He won't be caught, depend on that."

"I think he will. Why, he revel-headed a fellow as Bert Holton was deceived, you know."

"Well, there was a good deal of reality in his case, and the assault on poor Mr. Fontain plainly indicates that one man has been in dead earnest all along."

"You mean Old Antelope?"

"Yes."

"He has acted strange enough. I don't understand his doing Mr. Fontaine in the way he did, Tom."

"Easy to understand, Jack. He saw that his little scheme was about to peter out, and so in sheer rage he struck the man ever. I don't think he intended hitting him as hard as he did."

"If Fontain dies, then what?"

"It will go hard with the half-breed, that's all."

"In that case, if Bert's plan to make old Stanridge do justice, succeeds, it will come too late."

"Too late for the old man, but the widow and daughter will profit by the transaction," said Tom Thurston, assuming a worldly-wise air.

The listening man wondered what all this meant. A ghastly inkling of the truth may have penetrated his skull, but it was not sufficiently clear to be of a satisfactory nature. He was on the point of addressing the boys under the bridge when the sound of approaching hoofs fell on his voiceless in his tracks.

Some one was coming down the hill along the river road, which at the point where the road joined the bridge ran closely along the side of the bluff until it reached the summit some forty rods from that strange spot. It was along this road to the summit of the bluff that Captain Stanridge and his guides and guard had gone before, on their way to the Sioux camp.

Mr. Thurston sprang upright and grasped his rifle in readiness for action should a defensive movement become necessary. He also descended the highway of the road toward the bridge. The party was approaching, and from the evident confidence, Presently the party halted and one of the number dismounted, while a voice said:

"You may go back now. You will hear from me tomorrow."

Thurston recognized the speaker as Captain Stanridge.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Every subscriber is entitled to our free camera and patterns. See pages thirteen and fifteen.

The Real Letter.

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She—I never encourage crime.
He—Well, will you give me one, then?
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He—Ah, madam, he has such a sweet tooth!—Jester.

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Just One More.

Mr. Swelle Uppanbust—Dresses, dresses, dresses! My goodness, woman, do you never think of anything else?

Mrs. U—Why, now you mention it, Henry, I do need a new bonnet.

Two Collars, No Cravat.

Speaker Cannon entered his private office the other morning much preoccupied. Neal, the colored messenger of a succession of speakers, noticed there was something lacking in Mr. Cannon's attire. The cravat was missing.

In fact, the Speaker had come all the way from his residence to the Capitol without one. He was worried by the discovery. Just a few minutes before he had come from the barber shop, where he had made another discovery which he has not been able to explain.

As he was about to take his seat in the tonsorial artist's chair it was suggested to him that he would do well to remove his collar. Then Mr. Cannon pinched himself to ascertain whether he was asleep or walking.

"I thought I had just removed that collar," said he, and he went to the hook on the wall and satisfied his old eyes that he had. There was the particular piece of linen suspended. But he could not dispute there was another collar still around his neck, and he removed it to the same hook upon the wall.

Mr. Cannon had come to the Capitol wearing two collars, but no cravat. How he got them on the Speaker does not know, but it was done somehow in a fit of abstraction.—Washington Post.

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhea, Displacements, Pain ful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian Troubles. It cured me from home. It is a simple harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it Free to every suffering sister who writes to me. I have nothing to sell. This is a case of conscientious duty. I send it Free. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut, South Bend, Ind.

Voracity His Crime.

"Mister Jedge," said the old colored citizen, who came into the justice court leading a small negro boy by the coat collar, "Mister Jedge, I wish you'd please, suh, give dis boy ten years whar de State'll furnish de vittles for him."

"What do you mean?" asked the astonished Justice. "What has he been doing?"

"Eatin' me out er house en home, suh," was the reply, "wid dat orgodly appetite er his, whar Jedge, he ain't satisfied ter do while dat swallowed Jonah couldn't hol' a candle ter dat boy's eatin' arrungements. Per de Lawd's sake, Jedge, let de State feed him a while, so's de yuther chillun kin pick up en enjoy life."

Liked Getting Acquainted.

Mr. Hanna was almost without fads, says the Kansas City Times. A woman of his acquaintance had the following conversation with him recently:

"What do you do for amusement? Do you have a yacht on the lakes?" asked the woman.

"No; don't care for it," he replied.

"Do you go in for horses and racing?"

"No; don't care for that."

"Do you like fast horses for driving?"

"No."

"Do you wrap yourself up in fine paintings and sculpture?"

"No."

"Have plants or orchids?"

"No."

"China?"

"No."

"Theater?"

"Yes, I like it."

"Dogs?"

"Only for the service they can render."

"Well, what is your weakness, then?"

"People," he replied. "I like to make new acquaintances. I like to take them into my home. I have a fine place five miles out, and I like to entertain well-known men and women there and get acquainted with them."

A Paper Kettle.

Did you ever boil water in a paper kettle? Make a little box of foolscap, put threads in the corners for handles and hang it over an alcohol lamp. Very soon the water will boil and the paper will not catch fire. This is because the heat from the lamp is used in changing the temperature of the water from cold to hot.

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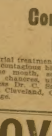

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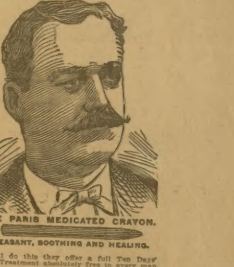

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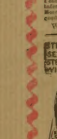

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